

LATTER-DAY POEMS



WILLIAM COWIE

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BY
WILLIAM COWIE



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BY WILLIAM COWIE

PREFACE

I KNOW that some of these poems, in slip or manuscript form, have given pleasure to some people, and it is in the hope that they will give pleasure to more that I venture to put this book before the public. Some of them—"Where the Rest have Gone," "Going to Church" and "Consistent Dying," for instance—will probably not give pleasure but the reverse of it to the strictly orthodox in religious matters; to these good and respected people I say that it was never in my mind wantonly or unnecessarily to attack or belittle the faith of any one, but only to express honestly my own views. I have a very sincere respect for a sincere believer, no matter what may be my opinion of the belief itself; nor do I forget that that opinion of mine may be of very small consequence. If it be thought that I have sometimes aimed at individuals, I answer that it was never the individual but rather the *type* I had in mind. Possibly some of the pieces might pru-

Preface

dently have been excluded on the score of too much "subjectivity," but I have often observed that verses of which I thought highly were the least liked by other people, and *vice versa*, so I put them all in and let them speak for themselves. I hope that one or two of them will carry their own suggestion that they are not to be taken in the most deadly seriousness.

W. C.

SYRACUSE, March, 1904.

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“BLESSINGS BE WITH THEM AND
ETERNAL PRAISE”

WHEN to my room I come at night
Then is my heart filled with delight;
The day's long labors then are o'er
And left behind, they vex no more.

There on my desk Friends wait for me
Whose very names I joy to see,
The Books o'er which I love to bend;
By bards and “mighty poets” penned.

Let others choose the ling'ring tale,
The last new novel, weak and stale,
Or hang entranced on wounds and wars;—
Give me the songs caught from the stars!

No jingling rhymer shall intrude
Upon my eager solitude;
But let their strains be echoing
Whom Nature's self taught how to sing!

“ Blessings be with Them ”

To those who love the Sons of Song
No other books can please them long ;
The mind 'tis easy to control ;
The Poets only swell the soul !

Accept my thanks, immortal few !
Who peace and hope and comfort too
To me in many a weary hour
Have brought with such refreshing power.

Ye Voices of the Universe,
My teachers and my ministers !
Who lift me from my earthly cares
Aloft to clearest heavenly airs :

Take me a moment by the hand
And let me reverently stand ;
I may not wear the diadem,
But let me touch your garments' hem.

Illumed by your celestial rays,
Read in my streaming eyes your praise ;
And in my falt'ring accents rude
Eternal love and gratitude !

THE LITTLE GREAT

I SAW him stalk across the floor,
The pride-puffed man, the little great;
Mayor was he or Senator,
Some "leader" of his town or state.

His followers shout, the trumpets sound,
He strikes his head against the sky,
He glances haughtily around
And thinks: Oh, what a man am I!

I hear him spout, dispute, predict,
And strut in eloquent debate;
Far be 't from me to contradict:
Who cares what says the little great?

His threats are naught; and known to me
His blandishments and cunning ways,
And when his tongue with praise is free
I'd rather have his blame than praise.

The Little Great

Though with the rest I watch the show
I hold myself in due control;
I cannot honor him: I know
His emptiness in heart and soul.

No thought has he for others' weal;
He strives for place and power and pelf,
But with no kind or generous zeal;
His labors all are for himself.

Oh, for a man that round him folds
The banner of the just and true,
Prizes the people's place he holds
But for the good that he may do!

Yet he through life content will go,
No flaw suspect, no fault confess:
How should he, since he ne'er will know
His own exceeding littleness?

For me, I marvel at the plan
That seems to rule the partial skies,
And gives to such a pigmy man
Such large opinion of his size!

The Little Great

But this I know: the Gods shall yet
 Their own eternal law fulfill,
And greatness only shall be great
 And littleness be little still!

No envy shall I hold for him;
 I know it comes, his certain fate;
Oblivion soon shall o'er him swim,
 The doom of all the little great!

TURN OF THE YEAR

IN the dark of the winter night
Lay the Northern lands a-cold ;
But lo ! ere the dawn's drear light
A secret to them was told.

Far in the South, where he ranged
O'er palm-tree and coral main,
The Sun in his motion had changed
And turned to the North again !

Frozen and chill was the heart
Of the woods, in their snows asleep ;
But they woke with a sudden start
As He paused in his mighty sweep.

And from hemlock tall and from pine
The white flakes shower'd like rain,
As they stirred at the secret sign,
And knew he was coming again !

Turn of the Year

And the breast of the snow-heaped North
 With a nameless ecstasy thrilled,
As she trembled the tidings forth
 To forest and river and field.

“He is coming again!” breathed the woods,
 The hills and the shivering plain,
“At last!” sobbed the ice-bound floods,
 “He is coming to us again!”

The wolf in his dark den housed,
 And the birds by the lonely grange,
Dumb through the long night drowsed,
 Nor guessed at the mighty change;

But the lakes and the oceans knew,
 And the lands of the Northern zone,
Though faintly they fell as the dew,
 The far-off feet of their own!

Through their deeps it floated and rang
 The rapturous wild refrain;
“He is coming again!” they sang,
 “ Our King, He is coming again!”

THE BOYS

"O! Ye douce folk that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool!"—BURNS.

ALL men have their ways of enjoyment;
Some costly pleasures buy,
And some are for joys that are simple,
And one of these am I:
For to me still the chief of my comforts
And the solace that never cloy
Is to hie me away of an evening
To meet down-town with The Boys.

There are those, I know, that reprove it,
That solemnly shake the head
And believe there's a mighty virtue
In an early going to bed;
Small drop of hot human kindness
Their chilly blood alloys;
Oh! I pity the man so careful
That he can't sit down with The Boys!

There are things some men count sinful,
Upon which the rigid frown,

The Boys

That show not so on The Journal
Where everything's set down ;
The Almighty Judge that's above us
No vengeful pen employs ;
And I'm sure the Recording Angel
Has a special page for The Boys.

It is well there's a Court up yonder
Looking down with a wider ken ;
It is well that the final verdict
Will not be pronounced by men ;
And if at the last I am fated
To the sentence that destroys,
'Twill not be because I loved so
Those evenings with The Boys.

So the wise men, the moralizers,
May frown upon my ways,
And for all my comings and goings
Have never a word of praise ;
They may reprobate and rebuke me,
But I will not heed their voice ;
They know not whereof they are talking
They never met The Boys !

The Boys

Chagrins I have known and failures,
Of crosses I've had my fill;
But I've kept a clean conscience always,
Meddling not with the things that kill;
An honest heart and a kind one,
That is what above all I prize,
And I find them around me in plenty
When I meet down-town with The Boys.

I am growing old; well I know it!
And The Boys grow older, too;
Year by year the chinks are widening
And a clearer light steals through
From the Other Land, giving warning,
To my thinking a pause and a poise,
And gilding for me with a glory
The grizzling heads of The Boys.

I know not what is before me;
I'll take my chance with the rest;
My lot will be hard, I fear me,
If I'm judged by what I've professed;

The Boys

That is, if the Church is the only
True judge of the heavenly joys,
For I doubt if it thinks there's salvation
In a night down-town with The Boys!

But wherever they go, God bless them!
When with Earth they've gotten through,
Be't to regions of light or of darkness
I want to go there too;
For still to be with them and of them
Shall be chief of my cherished joys,
No better fate I long for
Than to keep with the dear Old Boys.

Were the gates all jewelled and golden
And the streets of the shining pearl,
And everywhere spread around me
Of splendor a perfect whirl;
Even there I could never be happy
Nor with full free heart rejoice
If I couldn't in some quiet corner
Sit down as of yore with THE BOYS!

WHERE THE REST HAVE GONE

OUT upon Time's unquiet sea
We float from the mists of Eternity,
Above us Earth's sun and her flying rain,
As we drift to the clouds and the mists again ;
Behind us, before us, is silence profound,
And whence we are come or whither we're bound
We never shall know till with Life we are done,
And then we shall go where the rest have gone.

From the deeps we came, to the deeps we go,
The waters that bear us ne'er backward flow,
All flesh before us this voyage hath made
As we now make it, then be not afraid !
Where the clouds enfold it in darkness and gloom,
As our fathers came, to the verge we shall come,
A moment we'll linger, then one by one,
Over we'll go as the rest have gone.

And daily, hourly, I miss from its place
Beside me, some loved, some familiar face ;

Where the Rest have Gone

Or was it a countenance I loved not,
Gone from its long accustomed spot?
They fall from my sight and away they go
Down to the whirling torrent below ;
To the brink it swings them, and one by one
Over they go as the rest have gone !

And I, too, see, as my oars I ply,
Nearer the foam of the rapids fly ;
The shores flit faster, I feel as they glide
The stronger pull of the hastening tide ;
And some day soon, though I falter and shrink,
I shall find myself on that awful brink,
'Twill be my turn then ! I'll be the one,
And over I'll go as the rest have gone !

Over I'll go, and those cloudy deeps,
Whose secret alone the Eternal keeps,
What are they holding in store for me,
Those fathomless wastes of eternity?
Shall I wholly pass in that dim abyss
And fade away into nothingness,
Or, living and conscious, shall I go on?
—I know not : I'll do as the rest have done.

Where the Rest have Gone

I shall go like a king, with a fearless heart,
No craven terrors shall make me start,
No priest, no parson, shall buoy me up,
I shall drink to the dregs the appointed cup ;
No creed of a little Earth holds me ;
From uttermost Space, from Eternity
I came ; when with Time and with Earth I am done
I shall go, as I must, where the rest have gone !

HALF-PAST FOUR IN THE MORNING

SOME people can sleep the whole night through,
And with no tumbling or turning,
And some sleep best when the night is new,
And some sleep best in the morning.

And for some;—I trust their number is few!
The hours go a-bugling and horning;
They can neither sleep when the night is new,
Nor yet can they sleep in the morning.

For me, my early rest is the best;
If I wish to slumber fairly,
Would I make old Somnus a lingering guest,
I must turn into bed right early.

No matter when to my couch I take,
Or where I may be sojourning;
My slumbers break, and I'm wide awake
At half-past four in the morning.

Half-past Four in the Morning

Oh, a dreary hour is that half-past four
To the mortal that sleepless tosses ;
When it opens your eyes, how it opens the door
To all your troubles and crosses !

In the light of day you can drive them away,
Their worriment easily scorning ;
But oh, what a sway and a power have they
At half-past four in the morning !

If you're down on your luck and the world's unkind
And your outlook is none too cheering ;
If it's in your mind that you're falling behind,
And the favoring gales are veering.

If your hopes are low and your courage too,
And the quilt of your life needs darning,
With the needle lost ; how I pity you
At half-past four in the morning !

And oh ! if some foolish things you've done ;
Are there spots that you'd wish brighter ;
If your conscience sometimes weighs a ton,
And won't grow an ounce the lighter ;—

Half-past Four in the Morning

From her pricks by day you may not be free,
But I'll give you an ample warning
That old R. E. full-sized you'll see
At half-past four in the morning!

If your blood runs cold, and you're growing old,
And you like a slipper that's roomy;
If you fear your story is almost told,
With the latest chapters gloomy;

Old Granny Care with her tangled hair,
And her cold eye on you turning,
'Tis she will preside at your bedside,
At half-past four in the morning!

Ye Powers that favors on men bestow
Hear ye my prayer and be gracious;
I ask not much; let your bounty flow,
And my hopes not prove fallacious.

I shall not ask you my coffers to heap
With gold till they're overturning;
I'll only ask you to let me sleep
After half-past four in the morning!

AFTER WE'RE UNDER THE GROUND

LIFE, with its joys and its raptures,
 Troubles and trials and cares ;
Life, with its wreaths and its roses,
 Nettles and thistles and tares ;
Are we among the defeated,
 Are we with victory crowned :—
What does it all amount to
 After we're under the ground !

Toiling for fame or for riches,
 Will-o'-the-wisps leading on,
Gaining the spot where the gleam was,
 Only to find it is gone ;
Racing and wrestling and jostling,
 Hardly we dare to look round ;—
What does it all amount to
 After we're under the ground !

After We're under the Ground

Breathing the name of the loved one,
 Swooning in bliss or despair ;
Never was mistress like this one,
 Never a woman so fair !
Faint with delight hath she favored,
 Hopeless if but she hath frowned :—
What does it all amount to
 After we're under the ground !

Caught in the crush and the turmoil,
 Tossed on the tide's ebb and flow,
Heedless of all that's above us,
 Reckless of all that's below ;
Make we the beach treasure-laden,
 Wash we ashore with the drowned ;
What does it all amount to
 After we're under the ground !

Riches, we can't take them with us,
 Fame, what is that to the grave ?
Where are the years that we squandered,
 Where is the life that we gave ?

After We're under the Ground

Wasted and lost in pursuing
Blindly the bliss never found?
What does it all amount to
After we're under the ground!

Oh! could the dead for a moment
Wake from their slumbers and think,
Strange would their doings appear then
This side eternity's brink!
"Surely it was a mistaken
Road over which we were bound;"—
So would they say could they reason
After they're under the ground!

So would they say ere, bewildered,
Weary from drowsings so deep,
Groping about them for clearness,
Sank they again into sleep;
Asking, the while they composed them
Anew to that slumber profound;
What did it all amount to,
Now that we're under the ground!

TRUTH

I SAW their names in the papers,
The list of the millionaires,
The men who gathered the wheat in
While I was gathering tares.

And it made me spleenish and spiteful,
To think I was left in the ditch;—
But I asked: Whence came their millions,
How did they get so rich?

And I answered, myself, the question,
As I mused in my dingy den;
For I had known them from childhood,
Most of those wealthy men.

And this is the way I answered;—
And I would no man defame;—
They had mostly got it by thieving,
Though under another name.

Truth

Not with pistol or bludgeon,
Not with violent hands
Had they filled those opulent purses,
Swoll'n to bursting their bands.

Though I sometimes think the pistol
And the "stand and deliver" of old
Were good as the ways men now have
Too often, of getting gold.

Whereof a perfect description
May in few short words be pent,
And 'tis—whate'er you may call them—
Duping the innocent!

And again I lifted the paper,
The list once more to scan,
And I said: Not one of you all, sirs,
Has the soul of an honest man!

And I looked at my worn-out carpet,
Scarce hiding the creaky floor,
And said: I'll none of your millions;
No! I would rather be poor!

Truth

When, lo, a footfall, a rustling!—
With a gesture sudden, uncouth,
I turned; and standing beside me
Was the calm-faced Goddess Truth!

In the dim light standing beside me,
For my lamp was burning low;
But in her eyes, gazing on me,
A wondrous light did glow.

“ You would rather be poor”—I heard you—
Her coldness was complete,
But her voice was perfect music,
So clear and silvery-sweet.

“ And I read your thoughts of the rich men,
Whose names are there on the page,
And I know you envied their riches,
And swelled with a jealous rage.

“ You grudged e’en the vilest among them
And wished it were yours, his store,
And it made me smile when I heard you
Say you would rather be poor.

Truth

“ And I came to tell you ;”—her voice now
Grew stronger, and heaved her breast,
“ This many a day I’ve watched you
And you’re only a rogue like the rest !

“ Only a rascal, believe me,
A ship with a rotten keel,
And the thing that mostly grieves you
Is: you didn’t know how to steal!

“ ’Twas not that your conscience kept you
From meddling with ill-got gains,
’Twas not you were noble-minded,
’Twas only you didn’t have brains!

“ And now in your life’s bare winter
It is only this you do:
Grumble at those who were bolder
And skillfuler thieves than you!

“ You praise yourself that you’re honest,
Cry down the millionaire brood;
But I, Truth, know you’d have stolen
Like them if you only could!

Truth

“ And before I go I would tell you ;—
And think of it where you sit—
That an unsuccessful rascal
Is always a hypocrite !”

Then somehow, before I knew it,
From my room she vanished quite
And there I sat, all lonely,
In the dim uncertain light,

But my mind still held the picture
Of that form of fadeless youth,
I mused on all she had told me
And I knew her name was Truth !

SO-AND-SO

I WAS over at Bigtown the other day,
It was on a cold, rainy Sunday;
There was nothing to do and nothing to play,
So to help kill time until Monday

I got me a seat in the old brown church,
Said I: I'll for once hear a sermon;
(I think, if my mem'ry's not in the lurch,
The name of the preacher was Sherman).

His "people" thought he had preached right
well,
At least so I heard them mention;
But what his theme was I couldn't tell,
I hadn't paid much attention.

For I noticed, just as the sermon began,
While looking quietly round me,
In a pew quite near me, a certain man
Whose presence there did astound me.

So-and-So

For long ere to Bigtown he went I knew
That man and his odorous story,
And strange it seemed that I now should view
Him there in the House of Glory.

How comes it, I said, as I bent to the ear
Of one who was sitting beside me,
That So-and-so is at worship here,
With a reason, I pray, provide me.

No word he answered, but service o'er,
My question he straight remembers,
And he proudly said, as we reached the door,
“ Why, he's one of our leading members !

“ No Sunday comes but *he's* in his seat,
Though the cold might make you shiver,
And when we've debts and expenses to meet
He's our most generous giver.

“ He helps us out with a lib'ral hand,
And we're proud of and thankful to him,
And glad he's got millions at command,
So his giving won't undo him.

So-and-So

“ Did you see, as he left the church to-day,
How our people thronged about him?
Oh! we love him dearly; I’d almost say
We couldn’t get on without him.”

As I walked away from the old church tow’rs
I ponder’d sadly a minute:
What a queer old place is this world of ours,
What a lot of humbug in it!

And my thoughts ran back to the days gone by,
When So-and-so was suspected
Of filching his millions; Ah, then, said I,
He wasn’t so much respected!

Then, people thought he should go to jail—
’Tis the plain truth I’m describing—
But the righteous cause will sometimes fail;
I remember the whispers of bribing.

Oh! where would he be now, So-and-so,
Had justice been done, I wonder?
I can’t just tell—not list’ning, I know,
To the brown church organ’s thunder!

So-and-So

But maybe, I thought, they've never learned
The tale of his old-time dealings,
Nor know that the ears of men once burned
With the history of his stealings?

Would they, if they knew that story of old,
So easy be in their suff'rance?
I almost answer'd: He's got the gold,
It wouldn't make any difference!

But let them go, lest I judge amiss
Those churchmen, clerks and civilians;
The thing that impressed me most was this:
That So-and-so stuck to his millions.

In his gray old age, coming nigh to the porch
Of eternity, soon to sunder
From earth, he has joined the old brown church,
But he still sticks fast to his plunder.

Oh! a pillar now in the House of Prayer
Is he and he praises the sermon,
And oft at his table and proud to be there
Is the good old Dominie Sherman.

So-and-So

When money is wanted his name on the roll
Is first, but he makes no blunder,
He gives but a cent where a dollar he stole
And he firmly clings to his plunder.

Oh So-and-so, there's a God above
In whom ev'ry true man's trust is;
We've long been told he's a God of Love—
But he's also a God of Justice!

He's a God of sunshine and love and peace
But he rules the storm and the thunder,
And be you sure no rogue he'll release
Till the rogue releases the plunder.

You sit each week in that high-backed pew
Till your own back aches and twitches;
But, trust me, God has no use for you
While you stick to your stolen riches!

Oh So-and-so, men say you've thriven,
Forgive if I rudely awake you;
Is there any church, think you, that to heaven
With the spoils in your hand can take you?

So-and-So

You may think you're safe if in church you pray
And pardons receive and anointments;
But there's going to be on that Final Day
Some terrible disappointments!

You'll find, I fear, when *you* seek to come
To the land of the milk and the honey,
Saint Peter will halt you and strike you dumb
With: You didn't give back the money!

He'll tell you these gates are open wide
And have been from days primeval
To evil doers who've truly tried
To undo their deeds of evil:—

But he'll tell you also, and in a tone
That will sound to you like thunder,
The stairs that lead to the Great White Throne
Won't carry a thief—and his plunder!

TURNED DOWN

I was a candidate for office once,
I thought mine was of all the likeliest chance,
The hour propitious and the circumstance:—
They turned me down!

I thought I was the leading candidate,
And that my name was surely on the slate,
And in fond expectation did I wait;—
They turned me down!

Though to the Party I was always true,
Alike at Austerlitz and Waterloo,
Though new defeats did but my zeal renew,
They turned me down!

Was it because I daringly had thought
The Captains didn't captain as they ought,
And sometimes my opinions got afloat,
They turned me down?

Turned Down

Did they suspect that I suspected them
Of blund'ring leadership, and did condemn
In words too plain the things that stirred my
 phlegm
So turned me down?

Because I restless grew at times and cross,
Not wholly deferential to the Boss,
Was this the cause that brought about my loss
 And turned me down?

In politics, as in the ranks of war,
Whate'er you think, keep on your lips a bar,
Else slim the chance for you of stripe or star;
 They'll turn you down!

Did they in heaving me thus o'er the brink,
Of Party or of Public interests think,
Or with their own advantage did they link
 My turning down?

Turned Down

I cannot tell; and, meantime, let me stem
The bitterness that would their course condemn;
No doubt the wherefores were enough for them
That turned me down.

For all I know their reasoning was true,
For all I know they gave me justice due,
Maybe good judgment raised the wind that blew
My card-house down?

And maybe, too; for I can only guess,
'Twas meaner motives that did them possess,
And of my aspirations made a mess,
And turned me down.

Maybe they found one in the suppliant crowd
Who more to them than to the Party bowed,
And with their largess quickly him endowed,
Nor turned him down.

Some one that wholly would on them depend,
And at their nod forsake his dearest friend,
And caper as they whistled, to the end,
If not turned down.

Turned Down

'Tis little hills surround the shallow glen,
The little boss likes best the little men,
Big sheep are restless in the little pen,
They break it down!

Why did they push my proffer'd plate aside,
And leave it all with victuals unsupplied?
I cannot tell; I know they did decide
To turn me down.

I only know they laid me on the shelf;
Gone were my dreams of coming place and pelf;
And what I thought I'd best keep to myself;—
They turned me down!

And be it so! with stomach staunch and stout
I'll take the potion as they've dealt it out,
And keep the Faith although the groundlings flout
At me turned down.

Like to the vagrant winds that round us blow
The Bosses, big and little, come and go;
Maybe of them I'll see the overthrow,
That turned me down.

Turned Down

And if I don't, I'll keep my thoughts serene,
My mind still open, and my conscience clean,
Well-pleased ere long, who knows? that I have been
 Turned coldly down!

The blissful hours the calm-browed thinker shares
When his ripe Autumn her rich fruitage bears
Go not with office and its paltry cares;—
 Then turn me down!

With eyes sure-fixed on some diviner goal
Let me in quietness my days control;
Let me not brush the bloom from off my soul,
 But turn me down!

Yes! when in soberness my heart I sound
I find no soreness there, no rankling wound,
And I am glad the Bosses on me frowned,
 And turned me down!

CONSISTENT DYING

HE lay in silence on his bed,
They told him he was dying ;
“ I’ve known it all the time,” he said,
“ But what’s the use of crying?
“ My years are ripe, I’m all unsound,
“ ’Twere best that I were underground.”

Then spake an anxious Christian friend :

“ Now that the end is near you,
“ Shall I not for the parson send
“ To comfort and to cheer you?”—
“ Send for no parson, friend, for me ;
“ I’ll die as I have lived,” said he.

“ In health and strength not much I prayed,
“ Small use had I for churches,
“ Now at the last it sha’n’t be said
“ That I essayed to purchase
“ With selfish whinings, all too late,
“ A passport for the Golden Gate.

Consistent Dying

“ As backward o’er my life I look

“ I wish I had done better,

“ But now the record’s in the book

“ Down to the smallest letter ;

“ For better or for worse ’tis writ

“ And I must take the judgment fit.

“ I held myself of false and sham

“ On earth a good diviner,

“ And of one thing I certain am,

“ That God must scorn a whiner ;

“ The door is closed, the key is turned,

“ And I shall get the wages earned.

“ And what those wages are to be

“ No parson can disclose to me,

“ He cannot, if he ban or bless,

“ One penny make them more or less ;

“ The Power that regulates that fee

“ In its own way will deal with me.

“ I have no claim to high rewards,

“ And yet this thought some cheer affords :

Consistent Dying

“ I’ve done no wrong to any man,
“ To live and let live was my plan,
“ And I am sure no Deity
“ Has any wrong in store for me.

“ I ne’er believed in hell, but, friend,
“ If wrong in that opinion
“ I’ve nothing done that God should send
“ Me to that foul dominion ;
“ And heaven would scarcely suit with me
“ If it’s what parsons say ’twill be.

“ If there’s a life beyond the grave
“ I’ll find it in my station ;
“ For more than that I do not crave,
“ Nor ask for exaltation ;
“ The nobly pure, the truly great,
“ Not yet for these were I a mate.

“ And for the worthless and the vile,
“ I’ve scorned them still while living,
“ For rogue and knave I had no smile,
“ And I have no misgiving

Consistent Dying

“ That after death, if I live on,
“ My lot will e’er with such be thrown.

“ And if the grave’s to be the end,
 “ No life beyond the present,
“ Old Mother Earth has been my friend,
 “ My time on her’s been pleasant ;
“ Content, I’ll seek in her soft breast
“ Her crowning gift, the perfect rest.

“ In humbleness I leave it all
 “ Unto the Great Designer ;
“ No tears have I, no coward call,
 “ I’ll be no deathbed whiner ;—
“ Send for no parson, friend, for me,
“ I’ll die as I have lived,” said he !

GOING TO CHURCH

“WHY don’t you go to church?” friends often ask,
And think because I don’t I’m in bad ways;
And sometimes one will undertake the task
To bring me there, and will not heed my
“Nays!”

“Come hear our minister, he talks right well;
He’ll put some new ideas in your head;
You think you know it all, but he can tell
You things you never thought of; come ahead.

“’Twon’t do you any harm, and maybe good;
You’ll feel the better for ’t; try once and see;
I’d be so pleased to have you say you would;
Come up next Sunday, take a seat with me.”

When careless worldlings talk to me like this
I long to give my thronging thoughts full vent;
But yet I speak not; ’twould be ta’en amiss,
They make me angry with their self-content.

Going to Church

Church-going is with them a thing of form,
A question oft of sunshine or of rain ;
And if by chancing of some petty storm
They're kept at home, they almost count it gain.

Nor feel they *There* the Holy Place's power ;
Lightly they come, as lightly they depart,
And when they've passed the doors, within the hour
Their thoughts are busy with the shop and mart.

Far be't from me that sacred path to scorn
O'er which so many weary feet have trod
To find for breaking hearts and bosoms torn
Solace and comfort in the House of God !

To you who carry thither minds devout,
Pure hearts sustained by Faith in virtue's ways :
Oh, souls sincere, to you my heart goes out
In honor, love, respect, profoundest praise !

Oh, ye who that Tabernacle fare
With joy exceeding and with gratitude,
To whom the feeblest word that's uttered there
Drops as the manna on a heart renewed,

Going to Church

I envy your unquestioning belief,
The peace that comes to you through praise and
prayer ;
Oh, that I were like you, and that my chief
Of joys could be like yours, to worship there !

But if I go to church, shall I approve
Teachings which in my heart I can't believe,
The worn-out dogma in the worn-out groove
And spoken words that only make me grieve?

My own poor little creed, how small a thing !
I have no pride of intellect ; I see
Too well my weakness ; yet to it I cling ;
Honestly held it is enough for me.

To the great Power that spanned yon arching sky,
My vows of utter truth let me renew ;
What in my soul I feel to be a lie,
I will not say that I believe it true !

Going to Church

Christian or not! what signifies a name?

Doubts have I had even since my earliest youth;
Not at my bidding came they; do not blame
If I refuse to palter with the Truth!

They tell in church God sent his innocent son
To make upon the cross the sacrifice
Of his own life, that guilty men might run
From hell to mansions in his Father's skies.

And how in Adam's sin all mankind fell,
And hopeless dwelt, beyond Salvation's pale
Until the Saviour came;—no more I'll tell;
I have no patience with the childish tale!

And on that sweet and radiant Human life
The church has reared a superstructure vast
Of fables with all sober sense at strife;
Which men might credit in the unripened past

But not to-day! not in these latter years,
When Reason's light divides the false and true;
Man shall no more be slave unto his fears;
Give him the Truth; and nothing else will do!

Going to Church

Give him, oh churches! his birthright again;
Lay not upon him your restraining rod;
You'd have him honest in the things of men;
Let him be honest in the things of God!

Oh! let man's reason be at last set free;
Fables impossible lay on the shelf;
I want nor man nor God to die for me;
If guilty, let me pay the debt myself!

Nay, let me pay it? Yea, indeed I shall;
If I have sinned against His laws, I know
I and no other one shall hear the call
To punishment, and I shall have to go.

Now let those tales wherewith the ignorant pen
In credulous times that lofty life entressed
No longer vex the ears of thinking men;—
Immaculate Conceptions and the rest!

Strip such poor hind'rance from that high career,
Whirl it away with a most winnowing fan;
Christ's glory and his greatness best appear
To those who hold him for a fellow-Man.

Going to Church

The Son of God! prize that not over much
We all are sons of God; the eye is dim
That counts not on the earth a thousand such,
Noble and pure, the only Seraphim!

Then let us only to that Spirit bow
Who built the one true church, the universe,
And gave us seas and continents below,
And suns and stars above for ministers.

And higher far than mightiest stars that swim
In boundless space, each in His sure control,
Who gave us that which makes us kin to Him,
This mortal man's immortal human soul.

Man needs not faith in dogmas or in creeds,
A child no longer is he, nor a clod;
Light from on high illumines him; he but needs
Faith in himself and faith and trust in God.

Going to Church

For me; my church shall not be made of stone,
Or built on earth; from farthest space shall
stream
Its light on me; in quietness, alone,
I'll bow before that "visionary gleam."

Unvexed by mediator or by Priest,
Whose dronings oft my strong upliftings freeze;
Oh, thou that carest even for the least
Of men, I better know my wants than these!

I would not go to church but once a week
Nor wait till Sabbath bells ring out their chime,
Spirit Supreme! thee rather would I seek
And hold communion with thee all the time!

Let me be guided by Thy will revealed
Within my breast, and let me walk with Thee;
Then if my wand'rings chance by flood or field,
Thou too art there, and there my church shall be.

Going to Church

Put Thou thy hand upon my brow: Thy laws

Give me to understand and make my care:—

I shall not need to “go to church,” because

My church shall be, as Thou art, everywhere!

MARCH OF MAN

"When I beneath the cold red earth am sleeping,
Life's fever o'er,
Will there for me be any bright eye weeping,
That I'm no more?"

—MOTHERWELL.

WHEN I beneath the appointed earth am laid,
"Life's fever o'er,"
May there be no lament or moaning made,
That I'm no more.

When, like a pebble dropped in ocean's deep
From life I fall,
Why should I ask that there be one to weep
A loss so small?

I shall have had my time; the little day
To me allowed,
Or late or early shall have rolled away,
And brought the cloud.

March of Man

With no reluctance let me bow my head
 To them that come
With bounding steps and brows begarlanded,
 To their new home.

I know that after I am laid aside
 In breathless rest,
Th' unfailing sun shall wait at morning tide
 For east and west.

And rains shall fall, buds swell and blossoms blow
 In spring's sweet time,
And all the punctual seasons come and go
 From clime to clime.

And birds shall warble as the day departs
 Where lovers meet
And radiant youth and maid, with straining hearts,
 Shall find life sweet!

Oh, happy lovers! vain to fear that ye
 Should earth misprize
Who find in bow'ry walk and trysting tree
 God's paradise!

March of Man

Yea! youth and beauty shall go hand in hand
 With hearts of gold
And love wave over them his rainbow wand
 As from of old.

And vigorous men by natural force shall climb
 To high commands;
And all the mighty business of the time
 Be in their hands.

With eager feet they'll race for fortune's spoils,
 Nor shall they fail,
Nor find in life and her sufficing toils
 Aught to bewail.

For them shall swiftly speed the busy hour
 On all their ways;
Earth and her tasks for every active power
 Shall fill their days.

While weaker hearts shall suffer sore defeat
 Through all the years;
Their meagre bread in sorrow shall they eat
 And bitter tears.

March of Man

Yet finding, haply, in the fiery rain
Of their distress
Sweet recompenses, of a nobler strain
Than coarse success.

And some by paths forbidden shall not pass,
But enter there,
The ways that end but in the black morass
And withering air.

I see the old men find th' accustomed spot
At eventide,
By the young sons of strength regarded not
And pushed aside.

Like weary sailors, worn with voyaging,
This cove they seek;
And while to life's last shore they feebly cling,
I hear them speak.

The tales so often told they'll tell again,
With garrulous tongue;
And how all mankind honest was and plain,
When they were young.

March of Man

And while on this and that each has his say,
 In changeful chat,
They're sure the world grows worse from day to
 day,
No doubt of that!

And dolefully they'll wag each ancient beard,
 And heave the sigh,
And how it's coming soon what long they've feared
 They'll prophesy.

Well-pleased to think that ere that chaos comes,
 (So will they say),
Beyond the reach of its alarming drums
 They'll be away.

So have the fathers talked since from the void
 Earth reared her shelves,
Forgetting that the fallings-off descried
 Were in themselves.

March of Man

Oh, hoary men! Earth hath no place for you
 'Mid them that throng
Her halls and find her beautiful and new;
 The young, the strong!

For them the garland from her secret bower;
 The rarest gem
From her exhaustless mines is in their power
 And spoil for them.

They are her children, and her love they share,
 Her face they know;
Led by her mother's hand through regions fair
 They fearless go.

She leads them long, through flow'ry pastures wide,
 At length, full-grown,
Behold! no more they find her at their side;
 They walk alone.

And boldly fare they, in their sturdy prime
 And far they go;
But though the path not changes, in due time
 Their steps are slow.

March of Man

Nor can the sunshine longer light the plain,
Nor birds nor flowers
With song or fragrance wake the numbing brain
And failing powers.

They cannot see, although it is not night,
Their eyes are weak ;
Grown cold and dark within, for warmth and light
Without, they seek.

They beg for quickening heat, but beg in vain,
With pleading cries
Nor shall that vanished vision come again
To those dim eyes.

Their day is done ; the gathering darkness falls
Around them deep ;
From out the gloom the last bell faintly calls ;
And let them sleep !

For me, if left till mortal vision blear
In age's night,
Oh ! may the inward eye dwell with me clear
And see aright !

March of Man

Let me still forward look, with heart elate
 To those far years
That shall bring man to his sure-destined fate
 Though oft through tears.

And they that follow here. Oh! may they see
 The pits and snares
In which their fathers fell; may they be free
 From our despairs!

Alas! they too shall know the weary hours;
 To them, at length
Shall come, in their own time, the less'ning powers,
 And flickering strength.

With equal fate they too the path shall try,
 Their fathers trod;—
But more than these may they be guided by
 The hand of God!

And may the generations that await
 The distant days
Still higher, farther go, till at Heaven's gate
 The song they raise

March of Man

Of man to glory brought by grace of God,
And that strong soul
That could no dwelling find, nor sure abode
Save that high goal.

For ever upward is the march of man ;
The road, though dim,
Hath one sure end in the eternal plan,
And leads to Him !

We shall not see that far but certain day,
Yet may we show
Some monuments that mark an upward way ;
Be 't ours to go

A little farther than our fathers went,
That those to come
Our prints may see, and rise, ere they be spent
Still nearer home !

That when perfected man at last shall reach
Those sacred towers,
He may survey, with grateful heart and speech,
These years of ours,

March of Man

And say, we too were in th' ascendant march
By which he came
To that high portal and celestial arch,
And gates of flame.

“ Lo! these were links in this refulgent chain
Now fixed above;
And blessings on them and the days of pain
Through which they strove

“ To bear it onward; let the hosts of Heaven
Their toils applaud;
And let eternal praise to them be given,
True sons of God!”

From man to man the glory comes and goes;
Each following race
Beholds with clearer eyes the light that shows
His resting-place!

The House, by human hands all undesigned;
There shall the soul
The immortal soul of man her dwelling find,
And final goal!

MILLIONAIRE VULGARIS; OR, CHURCH
AND MAMMON

WHO is't that rolls along the street in equipage so
grand,

With coachman struggling hard to hold the
prancing steeds in hand,

And liveried footman high behind, with folded arms
across?—

It is the mighty millionaire, the great financial
“boss”!

The monarch of the modern time, the magnate of
the street,

The man that only yesterday a fortune made in
wheat,

The man at whose controlling word obsequious
brokers fly,

Who sends the market up or down;—’tis he that’s
whirling by.

Millionaire Vulgaris

The people stand to look at him, they watch his
wheels retire,
For has he not got store of that which they, too,
most desire?
The winner in the game wherein their chiefest joy
they find,
Who in the breathless race for wealth has left them
all behind.

The statesman, though with record long of service
pure and wise,
The poet, though with song divine, caught from
the vaulted skies,
The thinker, trained in studious hours for human
weal to plan;—
What were they to that staring crowd, compared
with that rich man?

What though his gains were foully got and coarse
his nature be,
And all the learning that he knows, the rule of two
and three;

Millionaire Vulgaris

What though his tastes be vulgar all and vulgar be
his mates ;—
He's got the gold, he's got the key that opens all
the gates !

What though on his triumphant path his ruin'd
victims lie,
And 'gainst his scheming knavery the Heavens
indignant cry,
What cares he for the bitter word ; it only makes
him smile
To think he could so easily so many men beguile.

Though known his stainèd character, his dark, de-
ceitful ways,
Yet eager men will throng to him as moths surround
the blaze,
And gracious woman, too, will come, driv'n by the
golden wand,
And save her sweetest smiles for him and take his
guilty hand.

Millionaire Vulgaris

He goes to church on Sabbath days; it is the thing
to do,
His wife and daughters with him, and there's
always something new
In their attire to catch the eye, some rare and costly
thing,
And when they lift the Holy Book, far gleams the
blazing ring.

The preacher labors at his task, that rustling pew
he eyes,
Not to displease its occupants, alas! too oft he tries,
And what his inmost thought should be he keeps
concealed with care,
No word he'll say to ruffle them; there's too much
money there!

And that keen man of millions, the Holy Man he
hears,
He listens, and contemptuous, but to himself, he
sneers,

Millionaire Vulgaris

With vision trained in other walks he sees beyond
the rim
And shallow service of the lips is shallower still to
him.

Oh! if the preacher were on fire and spoke in words
of flame,
If from his lips in thunder tones the stern reproving
came,
His careless hearers might be stirred by truth's
resistless power,
And e'en the scornful millionaire know one uneasy
hour.

But how shall he victorious be in his half-hearted
war
With men who for the things of earth in deadly
earnest are,
How shall he stay their hot pursuit of pleasure and
of pelf
Who, while he talks of better things, not better is
himself?

Millionaire Vulgaris

He pays his way, the wealthy man, and liberally he
gives ;
By gift of him and such as him the priest luxurious
lives ;
So while the poor are fain to crowd about the pulpit
stair,
The front-pewed member of the church is still the
millionaire.

No matter by what craft or guile he gained his
envied hoard,
'Tis all the same to them that take the tithings of
the Lord ;
Alas ! that e'er Religion's cause should thus itself
demean,
Or churches take the gold that's brought to them
by hands unclean.

To money made by roguery a curse forever clings,
It blisters, and where'er it goes, defilement with it
brings,

Millionaire Vulgaris

And if there is a place should bar the offerings of
 fraud,
And no ill-gotten gains receive, it is the House of
 God!

Oh! would the churches be the strength, the help
 they ought to be,
Nor break the friendly hearts that weep for their
 decadency,
Let them for proved integrity their high com-
 munion save,
Nor walk in easy fellowship with rascal and with
 knave!

The vicars of the Lord to be, to manifest His will,
The noble and the pure alone should that high office
 fill;
The holy messages of Heaven in vain to man he
 bears,
Who keeps with evil company—and be they mil-
 lionaires!

Millionaire Vulgaris

Oh! what a power the church might be in all the
walks of man,
If on the sinful, still, she placed her adamantine
ban;—
“ Your miry ways lead not to me, ye must be cleaner
shod,
To come within the gates that guard the spotless
House of God!

“ Though worldly men, like to yourselves pronounce
your name with praise,
And on your brows the vulgar gems of earthly
fortune blaze;—
Yet think not thus to come to me, and be you prince
or peer,
Who wear the jewel Purity alone can enter here!”

Unhappy is the land where gold is all that men
pursue,
And oh! how fall’n is the church when it grows
worldly too;

Millionaire Vulgaris

The angels of the living God, they will not dwell
with sin,

The violated courts they leave when Mammon
enters in.

The churches of these latter days have wander'd
from their goal,

The mightiest of them all but seeks to spread her
own control;

For power on earth her sway in Heaven to barter
is the plan,

And for her sake, not His, to stretch her empire
over man.

“ Be but obedient unto me,” she says with unctuous
voice,

“ I shall not interfere too much with your terres-
trial joys,

Come when I call, give what I ask, still strictly heed
my word,

And I will see you justified and safe before the
Lord !”

Millionaire Vulgaris

Alas! the yearning human soul that longs to leave
the mire,
Whose home is not on earth nor here the things of
her desire,
How shall she rise on soaring wing to that diviner
air,
If rituals and mummeries are all her meagre fare?

If to the longing heart of man the church no longer
speaks
In tones that echo clear the voice which so to list he
seeks,
If when the waves of doubt and fear around him
surge and swim,
She cannot reach the helping hand—what boots the
church to him?

Oh! when the trembling soul shall come to that
tribunal high
On whom shall she with confidence in that dread
hour rely?

Millionaire Vulgaris

Pure must they be that go with her, no doubtful
ways have trod;

Unstained must be the advocate that pleads for her
with God!

—But hark! the organ's music now through nave
and chancel soars,

And see the crowd, with eager eyes, beset the
guarded doors;—

What is't that all that curious throng to-day hath
hither led?—

The daughter of the millionaire, to-day she is to
wed.

At last the proud procession comes, the rising music
rolls,

And see upon the altar-steps the white-robed priests
in shoals;

Why are they garbed so gorgeously and why so
many there?

Go ask the gaping crowd without, go ask the mil-
lionaire!

Millionaire Vulgaris

The means by which his gold was won are known
unto the crowd,
No wonder that it scornful is and speaks its
thoughts aloud ;
But here and there a soul sincere with bitterness is
strained
To see the holy offices for Mammon thus profaned.

—And when he dies ;—Death calls for him as for
the meanest slave,
Nor yet can all his millions buy a respite from the
grave—
Then to the church he hopeful turns, by her
absolv'd and shriven,
And with her passport in his hand, how shall he fail
of Heaven ?

And then, with all her minist'ries the pliant church
comes in,
Commending to a righteous judge the soul that
dwelt in sin ;

Millionaire Vulgaris

As with a lawyer's purchased tongue she makes her
bootless plea,
And for the service done, Alas! she takes an ample
fee!

But vain your pleadings after death, your all-too-
late appeals,
'Tis on the record made in life the Eternal sets his
seals.
And would ye stead the trembling soul before that
awful bar
Oh! help it while there yet is time, before it gets
so far!

Oh! churches can you ask that men your hollow
power should own,
Who see you thus the evil deed, the life corrupt
condone?
Go! cover your vain altars up and bid your mock-
eries cease,
Ye who upon the golden calf bestow the Lamb's
white fleece!

Millionaire Vulgaris

Oh! fallen from that high estate ye held when ye
were true,
When grateful hearts were dearest gifts by mortals
brought to you,
Have ye forgotten what was said by one that did
not lie—
The story of the rich man and the slender needle's
eye?

Those eager crowds around your gates what shall
they think of you,
Oh church! thus dragged at Mammon's wheels and
in their open view,
Shall they not say that gold is king in castle, church
and cot,
Reflecting bitterly that gold is all they have not
got?

The man condemned to ceaseless toil through all his
earthly days,
What wonder if he restless grow at wealth's con-
tinual praise;

Millionaire Vulgaris

If gold alone's worth living for, what lawless
thoughts and grim,
Must oft be his who feels that gold is none in life
for him.

If man must set this drossy King upon the throne
of earth,
Preferring his to all the claims of character and
worth,
Behooves his pamper'd favorites to watch the omi-
nous vanes
That veer above the mass that owns no share in his
domains!

The worship of false deities ne'er ended but in woe ;
The annals of the olden time this easy truth will
show ;
The annals of the modern time will but the tale
repeat ;
The judgments of the Lord abide, in righteousness
complete.

Millionaire Vulgaris

Oh! nations of these latter days, sunk in your
gainful toils,
Bethink you where you're drifting to in chase of
sordid spoils;
It ne'er was filled at living springs the poisoned cup
ye quaff,
Know, man alone is king of earth, throw down your
golden calf!

And you, Columbia, the land that should the fore-
most be,
Think not true greatness always springs from
boasted liberty;
If millionaires are your best growth, as well, for all
your pains,
Your forests still unbroken stood, the Indian on
your plains!

I walk your streets, Columbia, amid the bustling
throng,
I see the weak and foolish face, the face clear-cut
and strong,

Millionaire Vulgaris

The young, the old, the rich, the poor, the slow, the
 swift, are there,
And sometimes as I musing go I meet the million-
 aire.

I watch them as they jostle by, I scan the eager
 crowd,
The timid and the bold I see, the humble and the
 proud ;
But there's one face I seek in vain, the visage that
 displays
Sure witness of a stainless life and length of well-
 spent days.

Oh! favored land, from sea to sea far-stretched
 beneath the sky,
On realms like yours did never yet the yellow sun-
 shine lie ;
Were fields like these but given to you to nurture
 bulls and bears,
And yield their ample harvestings for spoils for
 millionaires?

Millionaire Vulgaris

The crops you raise, Columbia, your heaping gran-
aries fill,
But what of them who in their sweat your boundless
acres till?
This is the crop, compared with which, all other
growths are poor,
Have you bestowed the care on them to make their
harvest sure?

Oh! tell them that unblinded all by this wide glare
of gold,
Him of the spotless heart and hand you still in
honor hold,
The just, the gently-natured man, unstained by
fraud or guile,
Or poor or rich—if only rich with gains of honest
toil.

Say that you know your strength is there, where
hearts are strongly pure,
That only in the growth of such your glory can
endure ;

Millionaire Vulgaris

And if he roll in countless wealth or if he daily
plod,
The man cannot stand well with you that stands not
well with God.

And tell your laboring myriads, they too are
nature's kings,
And free to them are all the fields in which true
affluence springs,
And that the direst poverty that mortals e'er dis-
tressed,
Is only where the human soul dies in the human
breast.

Pure in his thought, clean of his speech, by
Heaven's own sunshine fanned
Lo! here is my new gentleman, he of the horny
hand;
Nor blazon'd shield, nor pedigree he brings to
prove his worth,
And yet his country's proud of him, and that she
gave him birth.

Millionaire Vulgaris

Say to the sons, Columbia, whom your broad boundaries hold,
That earth has better fruits to show than heaps of
yellow gold;
For Sodom's apples let them not, mistaken, blindly
slave,
But for the nobler vintages that live beyond the
grave.

The spirit wise, through action born of balanced
thought refined,
The open heart, the seeing eye, the understanding
mind,
Though proud, yet humble, undistraught by sordid
joys or fears,
Undazzled by the shows of things through all the
rolling years.

Or rich or poor, the equal still of equal rich and
poor,
No higher and no lower known, in self-respect
secure,

Millionaire Vulgaris

Not giving more nor taking less than he will take
or give,
Content in human brotherhood as brother full to
live.

No claim of higher lineage shall e'er by him be filed,
Of Nature and of Nature's God the long-descended
child,
No boast of wealth or outward store that haply may
be his,
His merit not in what he has but there—in what
he is.

To needful laws, in rev'rence held, he gives obe-
dience due,
Still firm to make those laws obeyed by all his
fellows too,
For every natural human right prepared to make
demand,
Intolerant alike of slave or tyrant in the land.

Millionaire Vulgaris

Not heedless of the claims of earth, the home of
mortal man,
For her blest inmate made so fair by the Eternal
plan,
But living life in measure full, by no vain terrors
driven ;
The pleasant paths on earth, he knows, are those
that lead to Heaven.

The sacred joys of human kind, from these he will
not flee,
His faithful wife shall know his breast, his children
seek his knee,
Whate'er the fate in store for him when life's last
sands are run,
The gifts God sets on earth for him, he'll use them,
every one.

No visage sour, no long-drawn face, unmeet for
true and brave,
No abject prayer in terror whined before the im-
pending grave ;

Millionaire Vulgaris

In trust invincible he'll live, and when his days are
past,

From paradise to paradise serenely go at last !

Such are the sons, Columbia, that should be born
by thee,

And thou in store of such as these thy greatest
wealth shouldst see,

Then couldst thou lift thy queenly brows, fanned
by the heavenly airs,

The richest nation of them all—though not with
millionaires !

INTROSPECTION

"Oh, wad some power to ithers gie
To see us as oursel's we see!"

—BURNS—TRANSPosed.

I HEAR my name in public talk
With favor mentioned and with blame ;
Yet seldom does my cheek betray
Or blush of pride or flush of shame.

And honest friends will question me :
“ You seem to care not what they say ? ”
And marvel lightly that I keep
So calmly my accustomed way.

Ah ! not what papers say, nor what
Misknowing people gossip free,
Believing what they meanly wish ;—
It is not this that troubles me !

Introspection

But sometimes when I musing sit
And all that's come and gone review,
I find myself in lonely hours
Inclined to be a little blue ;

For when I scan the doubtful all
I've placed upon the past's full shelf,
What always stings me most is this :
My poor opinion of myself !

I would not grieve although the world
To me forgot to lift its hat,
Nor tinge my peace 'cause he or he
About me uttered this or that,

Could I but in a private hour,
Unmindful of such blame or praise,
Give ear with tranquil mind to what
The still small voice within me says !

The still small voice that will not cease,
That burns like flame for broken laws ;
The cheer that never yet was heard
That's yet the only true applause !

Introspection

The honors of the earth I know ;
 The clang of Fame's far-sounding bell ;
How pleasing to be pointed out ;
 But also, this I know full well,

The highest honor still it is,
 Though blazon'd on no shining roll :
To stand among the only great
 The noble and the pure in soul !

These let me join, and then shall I,
 Whate'er the world may think or say ;
Approving voices hear within
 To cheer me on my better way.

My better way that leads afar
 From where the muddy siren sings,
And brings my feet to certain paths,
 To clearer airs, diviner things !

VETERAN'S FUNERAL

THE flowers were heaped o'er his sabre sheathed,
By loving hands strown deep,
And prayers were whispered and blessings breathed
Where he lay in his final sleep ;
And music of choir and of organ rolled,
Pealing through chancel and nave,
And the solemn bell of his passing told,
As we buried our fallen brave !

Nor chant was wanting nor volum'd song,
Hymning the soldier's praise,
Nor speech that lingered, loving and long,
O'er his deeds in the perilous days
When the storm clouds hung o'er the troubled land,
And the nation's heart grew cold
As the cannon thunder'd the foe's demand,
And nearer their echoes rolled.

Veteran's Funeral

We heard how he sprang in that day of care
 With the valiant proudly forth,
When the shattering trumpets rent the air,
 Calling the Men of the North ;
Calling them swift where the loud tube's jaws
 Were flaming with shot and shell ;—
Eager to die for their country's cause,
 And the flag they loved so well !

His war-worn comrades did not lack,
 And their eyes with tears grew dim ;
All the days of danger and death came back
 As sadly they looked at him ;
And the flag was round him for which he bled,
 And medal and clasp he bore ;—
Sleeping the sleep of the patriot dead
 In honor for evermore !

Slowly they lifted him up at last,
 Those veterans wan and grim,
And our heads bowed lowly as they passed,
 And we thought not wholly of him ;

Veteran's Funeral

For their steps were feeble that once were bold,
Their temples hoary and bare;
And we marked upon *them* the scars that told
That they, too, had been there!

Bearing him tenderly forth they go,
And the soldier's step they keep,
The muffled drum-beat following slow
To the place of the soldier's sleep;
With trembling hands lay him softly away,
And the covering earth restore,
There leave him to stay till the Judgment Day
In honor for evermore!

They are mustering out at that last command,
They drop from phalanx and file,
The heroes that rescued this fair land
Where freedom and plenty smile;
And oh! let them not unheeded fall,
Let the heart of the nation stir
As they pass who gave at their country's call
All the best they had, for her!

Veteran's Funeral

Lay them away with a people's cries,
 With your tears their graves bedew ;
Let the children know how you grandly prize
 What the fathers did for you ;
Lay them away in the quiet bed—
 Safe from the cannon's roar—
Sleeping the sleep of the patriot dead
 In honor for evermore !

NEW YEAR'S WAIL OF A BENEDICT

"But how the subject theme may gang
Let time and chance determine,
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon."

—BURNS.

THEY tell me of Heaven and its gates of gold
Its walls of jasper and stores untold
Of gems such as ne'er on earth were seen—
No mortal eye could abide their sheen.
Where sapphires, rubies and emeralds rare
Are common as chuckstones elsewhere;
With amethysts there you could fill whole fleets
And diamonds are used to gravel the streets;
With other glories I can't recall,
I used to know them when I was small;
I used to know them and think some day
They would all be mine; but far away
Are vanished now those innocent times,
I hear no longer the heavenly chimes,
For some sad how, in these late years
Old Mother Earth, betwixt hopes and fears

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

That stretch no farther than her poor bound
All thoughts celestial in me has drowned ;
I've been so put to it making a livin'
I've lost all interest, it seems, in Heaven.

I suppose, lost Heaven of those young years
I should mourn your passing with scalding tears,
That my wailing numbers should clearly show
The grief I feel to have fallen so low
As to care no more in the least for you
Because on Earth I've so much to do ;
To have come at last in my lonely age
Through toil and trouble to that sad stage
Where all I pray for is rest and peace
After surrender of Life's hard lease ;
Oh! methinks it were surely the better plan
For a poor packhorse of a married man—
(My wayward muse for her theme has picked
The New Year's wail of a Benedict)—
Worn and worried through weary years
Hardened beyond either hopes or fears
Still on the looming edge of defeat
In the battle of making both ends meet ;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

I say it were surely the better plan
For such a heavily-laden one
To softly creep into Earth's kind breast
And lie down there in eternal rest ;
(For though she spread but a slim repast
She'll lodge you warmly at the last.)
So I long no more for your jasper walls
Your gates of gold and gem-starred halls
For the way I feel, now that I'm grown old,
To put it in gates is a poor use of gold ;
I should take no comfort in these, I know,
I'd rather be slumbering here below,
Down in the dust with the moles and worms,
But safe from the squalls and tempests and storms,
And as for the people I'd meet up there
They are not my kind and I shouldn't care
To meet them in Heaven or Hades or
In any old hall or corridor ;
They would only bore me ; and so I see
That that kind of Heaven is not for me !

I say these people are not my kind
And that's the notion that's in my mind ;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

It moves me to anything but mirth
To notice the sort of people on earth
Who are certain, themselves, of going to Heaven,
And to whose believing credit is given
By most of their fellows—but not by me!
I think that some of them wofully
Will be deceived when the due time comes
And they hear anigh the eternal drums;
That an ominous throb in that deep sound
Will strike somehow with a dread profound
Ears that waited for other notes—
The music of welcome that lightly floats
From hautboy, cymbal, dulcimer, harp,
In whose sweet cadence is nothing sharp;—
But the drums give warning of wounds and wars,
Oh! it's not so easy to get to the stars!

Earth has not to me been overkind
I've known the hell of a tortured mind,
The weary day and the sleepless night
Have not been strangers to this poor wight;
Of bitter blasts I have felt the force
And the gnawing anguish of remorse;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

The floods have hemmed me, with not a knoll
To swim to, and Peter, the good old soul,
Who saw my buffetings, I've no doubt,
Though he never offered to pull me out,
Yet from what I have read I think he'd be
Inclined at the last to be good to me ;—
(I've always heard he was kind at heart
To married men and took their part ;
He knows the burdens of that hard state
And likes on the sly to open his gate
To its crushed martyrs when at his wicket
They tremblingly ask for an entrance ticket.)
Old Peter, I think, if he's watched my case
Would show me too just a little grace
And mercifully would take me in
When at his portal I raised my din ;
But my courage fails me, my fancy faints
Before that army of musical saints.
A halo wouldn't look well on me,
And wings and I could never agree ;
Feathers are well on a goose or a crow
But where I could wear them I don't know ;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

It makes me smile and feel like a clown
To think of myself in a golden crown,
And as for the music of cymbal or harp
I ne'er could distinguish flat from sharp,
And so, as I say, it is not for me
That fairy heaven of my infancy,
All I now ask for is peace on earth
This whirling clayball that gave me birth
The only world I am sure of knowing
Out of which I came, into which I'm going.
Give me money enough to take me through
So I sha'n't be obliged any stealing to do!
Let me leave the board with a decent name
When I resign from the luckless game;
Give me food and raiment where'er I roam
With calmness abroad and quiet at home,
With loving kindness to all my fellows
And not for one of them any malice.
(These last two lines I have heard before,
I think they are out of the Gettysburg roar!)
And Oh, St. Peter! if you really exist
And you have, as they say, a merciful twist,

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

Would you grant, Oh Peter, my liveliest wishing
Let me off sometimes for a good day's fishing!
Grant me only these and the musical saint
Can tootle away to his heart's content!

But at this glad season—so people call it—
Never glad for me—may evil befall it—
When the old year goes and the new comes in
And the household bills, as over a linn
Are pouring upon you, all to be paid,
Till you're sick at heart, discouraged, afraid,
And the burden weighs on the "head of the house"
Till he wishes he were but a rat or a mouse
And could crawl away into some dark hole
Where bills couldn't reach him to wring his soul
When your cash runs low and your outlook's dim
And you're not in the money-making swim,
Growing feebler too both in mind and frame—
But the bills come rolling in just the same—
Oh! at such a time, if the power were given
To me, I'd make for myself a heaven!
And very simple my rules would be—
There wouldn't be of them but two or three—

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

And one of the first would be this, you bet,
There should be no trusting or running in debt ;
Were your better half for drygoods inclined
She should pay cash down or leave them behind ;
Did your daughter covet a fine new bonnet
She should never wear it with debt upon it ;
Oh ! if this plain rule were only followed
What rivers of misery would be swallowed
In the tranquil sea of domestic peace,
What wranglings and janglings would thereby
cease !

But if stores must trust and stores must be there
This other edict should be my care ;
I'd utter my fiat and make it plain
No women should come there, but only men ;
'Twould be law and gospel in my Van Diemen,
No drygoods stores or else no women !
For the foolish creatures, so far's I see,
Seem to think two and two make only three ;
But the chap that sells them the merchandise
Doesn't like to add, so he multiplies,

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

And the two and two, when they've left his pen,
Are six at the least and sometimes ten !

("The ladies," for this true song I sing
Will say I'm a peevish, a cranky thing,
The names they'll call me, I hear them now,
But never a frown comes on my brow,
My muse will warble the way she feels
And to you, Oh married men, she appeals !
You know the torture of those sore ills
You've "footed" them often, those awful bills !)

And as for the men : In my hereafter
I'd fill it with joy and pleasure and laughter,
And I'd save it mainly, my land of mirth,
For those who had been unhappy on earth,
Whose eyes down there had been used to tears
And hearts been heavy through long, long years ;
And for those who'd wander'd and gone astray
And lost in the bogs and thickets their way,
Nor ever again that way could find,
Oh, to these I think I'd be doubly kind !

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

Unto such as these should be surely given
The best front seats in my new heaven ;
And to bring them forward I shouldn't halt
Because their falling was their own fault ;
For where the blame for the fault first lay
Ah ! that's not an easy thing to say ;
And if some mortal should thither roam
Who hadn't been overblissful at home
Down here below, how my doors should spin
To let that weary wanderer in !
Oh ! it seems to me but a selfish thing
For those who on earth had everything
That earth could give and been happy there,
Never known misfortune, defeat, despair,
Snug by the fireside while in the storm
Others were freezing, they still warm—
Oh ! why should they who've been favored so,
Clamor for bliss hereafter too ?
Surely it seems they ask too much,
That earth should be sufficient for such ;
The storm-tossed only should find the calm
And the bleeding heart in heaven its balm !

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

My neighbor Tompkins across the street
Is held by the world for a man complete,
A thriving, driving, successful man,
Skillful to plot and able to plan
With a great big fortune swelling fast
His flag still flying at full topmast;
No care, no trouble, does Tompkins know
Except when one of his schemes won't "go";
His days are busy, his sleep is sound,
Quickly for him the months roll round,
And each year's end sees an added store
To what was more than enough before;
No thought has Tompkins that e'er had birth
Anywhere but in earthiest earth;
He likes success and he likes control
And that clog to a "business man," a soul,
Never hindered him when bent on winning
Or bothered his mind with thoughts of sinning;
For though he likes to be counted "square,"
He likes, too, the joy of "getting there."
Gossip to him is but idle wind,
He makes his point and he's not thin-skinned;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

An envied, a rising, looked-up-to man
Soon to be found in the foremost van,
Of the "leading men" neither least nor last
In the "hustling" town where his lot's been cast;
But were I to name the chief of his joys
I'd say that it's this! His girls and his boys
And the wife of his bosom all think that he
Is the pink and flower of humanity;
That man could be greater they can't conceive,
In him, him only, do they believe,
Not a thing they crave that he cannot give;
In perfect peace and content they live;
Sailing through life with not one lurch—
I wonder to see them going to church—
It can't be they go to make sure of heaven
But rather not from earth to be riven.
Since *she's* cut them off such a great big slice
What can they want of a Paradise?
Had favors like these to me been shown
I'd only pray to be let alone!
The foolish mortals, if I see through it,
They're in Paradise now—if they only knew it!

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

(Yet Tompkins at times is not so bold,
I've noticed whenever he has a cold
Or in some small way doesn't feel quite well
You'd think from his looks he had heard the bell
That tolled for the drawing of his last breath—
Ah! never talk to Tompkins of death!
For how could you ask him not to grieve
To think of going with so much to leave;
Oh! there's one sad comfort in this hard life
To those who've found it with misery rife
With cares and worries and sobbing and sighing
They're not so afraid as the happy of dying!)

I've another neighbor whom I know well,
I'll call him Jenkins; he doesn't spell
His name that way, but for my affairs
'Twill answer as well as the one he bears;
He's a pensive, sensitive, silent man,
Framed on a finer, more delicate plan
Than Tompkins, that satisfied son of Mammon,
But this is a man of a kind not common,
By nature lofty and pure in soul,
With thoughts not bounded by this poor hole

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

In which he drudges at tasks he loathes,
And yet he must drudge, for food and clothes
Are not to be got by musing and dreaming,
And he hasn't got Tompkins' head for scheming.
Inclined all outward show to detest,
"Plain living, high thinking," these suit him best;
Not a winner he in the worldly strife
And humble and simple must be his life,
And this quick thorn in his breast he carries,
A barb oft borne by the man that marries,
While the simple life for him is enough
There are those about him of different stuff;
Alas for him! they for whom he labors
Are other-minded; their richer neighbors
They envy and lay the blame on him
That they, too, are not in the fullest swim
Of the little life which to them were all
But to him so weary, barren and small;
Could they only with the Tompkinses vie
And diamonds, horses and carriages buy,
And live like them in a great big house,
The table groaning with venison, grouse,

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

And all the dainties people must eat
To be of the upper ten complete ;
Be seen at the opera and the ball
And other functions that loudly call
On the hearts of idle, silly women,
Joyous they'd be as shipwrecked seamen
'Scaped from the thundering breakers' roar
And tumbled at last on a saving shore ;
But my poor friend, though he does his best,
Nor whines nor whimpers, 'tis manifest
That having no heart for a worldly life
He's no fit mate for a worldly wife ;
Nor can wholly the worship of daughters gain
Who've taken from her the stronger strain
And toss their heads at the quiet nook
Where lies his solace in pipe and book.
Oh ! for such a one, not caring to roam
How deadly not to be happy at home,
Oh ! man's hard fate and yet so common—
Millstoned through life with a foolish woman !

But yet, Oh friend, while I pity you
I mourn and grieve for your partner too ;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

Why couldn't she some Tompkins have found
With whom her days had been one long round
Of common pleasures and earthly blisses
Which now with you she so sorely misses?
Right well I gather what she endures ;
Her life, I fear, is as wrecked as yours
(And that life, too, as precious to her
As yours to you, my philosopher !
With an equal privilege not to miss
Its share of content and happiness.
Oh Jenkins, my friend, when I turn it o'er
I only grow doubtful more and more
And a thought comes to me I scarce can check
That *you* are the millstone and hers the neck !
That the Powers above us count nothing common
That's dear to the natural heart of woman.)
But howe'er that be 'tis an awful thing
When the mated bells discordant ring ;
As I think of Jenkins' face of care
This is my cry, my earnest prayer :
Heaven help all husbands and eke all wives
Who've blundered thus in uniting their lives ;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

Don't talk to me of a hell hereafter,
You only move me to bitter laughter.
Here, in the present, on my own street,
I can show you a Hades all complete;
I could take you there in a minute's walk,
With Jenkins for guide—if he'd only talk!

I sometimes fancy old Earth is jealous
Of those uneasy misanthrope fellows
Who gloomily go their daily rounds
Sighing for something beyond her bounds;
If you'd have your mother be kind to you
To her be a son or a daughter true;
Think you she'll open to you her store
If she thinks there's a something you prize more
Than aught she gives and are one of the scoffers
At the treasures of her o'erflowing coffers?
If you'd be happy in her domain
Then let no rival your favor gain,
The bliss hereafter, the future woe,
Are only fables for all you know.
Maybe, dreams and nightmares gave them birth,
Will you poison for these your days on Earth?

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

Why puzzle o'er riddles you can ne'er make clear,
It's a comfortable thing to be happy here!

Maybe 'twere better, Oh Jenkins! my friend
If to all your mooning you put an end,
If the "word of the poet" you put aside
And mounted the horse that the worldly ride,
Making your mind up that Earth is all
And shutting your ears to the siren call
You fancy you hear in your quiet hours
Appealing to so-called nobler powers:
That you closed your eyes to the morning stars
And let them sink 'neath the cloudy bars
Never again to greet the sight
Of one content with the common light;
That you deemed the making of earthly money
More than the heavenly milk and honey,
That, taking a lesson from Tompkins' book
You sprang from your contemplative nook
Into the ranks of the hunters for gold
There to be ground to the common mould;
Could you only do this, Oh Jenkins, my friend!
How soon your heartaches would have an end.

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

The saddest, you say, of all self-slaughters?—
But think what a joy to your wife and daughters!
The hot heartburnings over and past;
The yoke unequal were equal at last.
And maybe in making them content
Your days, friend Jenkins, were better spent
Than in dreaming of things beyond the clouds
That come to men only with their shrouds
If they come at all, and that's uncertain,
None yet has lifted that dread curtain.

But I fear, Oh Jenkins, the “ray of heaven”
That's in you—Mercy! why was it given?
If he that gave it your good designed
He spoiled you for work of the Tompkins kind;
I fear that ray, that deadly gleam,
That lights your heart up while you dream
Will make it hard for you to sup
With common men from the common cup.
And should you try it, Oh! what remorse
Like his who feels he is growing coarse,
Or where such anguish and such gloom
As a noble nature's for its lost bloom;

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

Desp'rately striving but sinking still,
And ever weaker growing the will,
Slipping and sliding and falling fast,
The lights celestial all overcast,
Down to the pit where the tears of blood
Dry in the oceans of common mud:—
Oh, Mother Earth! 'tis said you're given
To men as a stepping-stone to heaven,
But you face both ways, as the lost can tell,
And your easiest stairs lead down to hell!

Maybe Jenkins' lot, when he's gone hence
To the dim hereafter, will recompense
For all the troubles he's had on earth;
'Twere pleasing to think he'd get a berth
Would gladden his heart and make him happy
As Shanter Tam was o'er his "nappy";
With fullest scope in the heavenly tent
To follow, joyful, his soul's true bent;
With a front-row seat and a clearer view
Of all that the radiant angels do
Than Tompkins, seated away behind
Or with the "gallery gods" confined,

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

(Discovering that though big below
He wasn't up here the total show ;)
'Twere pleasing to think, for Jenkins' sake,
At last had come *his* chance at the cake,
And, the seams all smoothed from his troubled brow,
He could say from his heart: It's all right now !
But Oh, friend Jenkins ! while thus I wish,
I doubt the hereafter makes not fish
Of one and flesh of another, but all
Are treated alike—no great, no small—
That the Powers above us, whate'er they be,
Rate Tompkins as highly as you or me ;
They sent him here as they sent the rest,
And who's going to say who's worst, who best?

And maybe, as I have said, this scheme
Of a world hereafter is only a dream ;
And sometimes, musing in quiet hours
On Life and Death and the unseen Powers
A thought comes to me, in rainbow array,
That that, even *that*, were the nobler way ;
'Tis a grand old thought when you apprehend
Earth may be all, beginning and end.

New Year's Wail of a Benedict

I know this notion with heresy's rife
But Oh, how sacred it makes this life!

And now, friend Jenkins, with moistened eye
I bid you farewell, I say good-bye!
The time comes soon both to you and me
When all the mystery we *may* see
And understand—shall we lose or win,
Or just go out as we once came in?
After all our fretting and fuming and frothing
Shall we find out at last—well, only nothing?

But one thing's certain, my pensive friend,
Whate'er awaits you at the end,
This fact shines out with a light most clear
That 'Tompkins at least has been happy here.
There's no denying the simple claim
That so far, at least, he's ahead of the game!

DEDICATED TO "THE GANG"

As a Solemn Warning and Invocation to Repentance

POOR Freddy Blank has gone to smash
Through years of waste and dissipation,
"The gang" are startled at the crash,
Theirs is the self-same destination.

Dame Nature dons her judge's gown,
Than her's no verdicts e'er were riper,
And long ago she laid it down
That they that dance must pay the piper.

The piper played with right good will
And Freddy danced and drank unheeding;
Now comes the settling of the bill,
Ah, friends, that is a sore proceeding!

Old Rhadamantha takes her seat
That colder is than frosted metal;
In vain for mercy you entreat;
"My lad," says she, "you've got to settle!"

Dedicated to "The Gang"

How face that sentence, stern, severe,—
The time has come you may not mock it!
Whose course of life has brought you here
With not a stiver in your pocket?

Ye "rounders" that so long the boon
Companions were of broken Freddy,
Amend your ways and do it soon
Or else to share his fate get ready.

Leave "booze" alone and slot-machines,—
Though hard may be such deprivations—
And spare your healths and save your means
And try to patch your reputations.

I know you well, I know you all,
And now I give you solemn warning,
The Piper soon will make his call;
Ah, that will be a blue, blue morning!

Keep from the bars; the mountain dew
Forsake, and shun the foaming flagon;
There's only one thing left for you,
And that's to mount the water-wagon.

Dedicated to “The Gang”

Climb high, and when you're up throw down
The steps by which you have ascended,
Then firmly hold that coach's crown
Until your journey's safely ended.

You may be saved; even on the brink
You may be pardoned and forgiven;—
And yet it makes me smile to think
Of such a gang as yours in Heaven!

Yes; when I turn the business o'er,
Indeed I scarce can keep from thinking
You'd best continue as before
And stick to slot-machines and drinking!

You let me not be overbold
Nor flout the Maker of the thunders;
The Lord is mighty, as we're told,
And even with *you* may manage wonders.

He may renew and cleanse your hearts;—
And, sure, no change could be completer,—
And make you meet for heavenly parts
And fit companions for St. Peter.

Dedicated to “ The Gang”

If He'll do this, and keep your gang
From slot-machines and aqua-vitæ,
My voice I'll raise, my harp I'll twang
And sing: He is indeed all-mighty !

THE MERCHANT CRÆSUS

ALL day long at his desk he sits,
Taking and making quotations,
And often he's almost out of his wits
With the stress of his occupations;
And messenger-boys and telephone-bells
About him are racing and jingling,
Till his weary brain at the racket rebels;—
Aching and throbbing and tingling.

And clerks and book-keepers come and go
With papers for his inspection,
Receiving his instant yes or no,
And the word of swift direction;
There are letters to write and dispatches to send,
And the typewriter's click ne'er ceases,
And of business, business, there is no end
In the haunt of the Merchant Cræsus.

Nor fruitless his labors; his gains grow fast,
He is getting rich in a hurry,
Nor e'er this thought through his brain has passed;
Is it worth all the bother and worry?

The Merchant Crœsus

His hives are heaped to the very brim
 With their stores of the golden honey ;—
Yet I sometimes think when I look at him,
 That he pays too much for his money !

It's wearing him out, yet to leave it behind
 Vainly you would beseech him,
Or think he could rest or comfort find
 Where the telegrams couldn't reach him ;—
It's wearing him out, yet he dare not stop,
 His soul it has killed already,
And it won't be long, if he don't give it up—
 And he can't !—till it kill the body !

Little he dreamed of the deadly clutch
 Of the whispering yellow siren ;
But he came too near and he loved too much,
 And he's fast in her jaws of iron ;
Softly she wooed him, the while she did
 With jewel and gem bedizen her ;
But the mask's off now and the claw not hid
 When she holds him a helpless prisoner !

The Merchant Cræsus

Fair are the favors that fortune gives,
As the Scotch folk would call them, bonnie;
But I pity the man that in slavery lives,
Be't in slavery to his money;
For the way's not long, and they never toy
Nor linger, life's silent postillions,
And there's much to see and much t' enjoy,
Even without your millions!

Give me the fields and the balmy woods,
And the open face of nature;
Let me walk by the shores of the sounding floods,
Nor fail of a man's full stature;
And the gleam of gold, let it not blind me,
Nor sway me from my heart's wishing;
Let who will be bound, but let me be free
To go, when I please, a-fishing!

May the days yet left me be spent in peace,
Mid pleasures of my own choosing,
Alike to the rapture of wealth's increase
Unknown, and the anguish of losing;

The Merchant Crœsus

Let my sun go softly down to the west,
All vapors before him shrinking,
And the gloaming-tide of my life be blest
With seasons of happy thinking,

In some quiet nook, fit for days grown calm,
No jangle of business near it,
Where the telephone-bell and the telegram
Come not to the brooding spirit ;
Where the heart is still and the thoughts are high,
As I muse in my mellow moonshine,
And the rainy night and the cloudy sky
Are dear as was once the sunshine !

And I think as I watch you, oh business man !
For gold thus your heart's blood giving,
That it's only a blind and a foolish plan
By which your life you are living ;
For if earth be all and the grave be the end,
Nor the spirit within us immortal,
How dreary the path is by which you wend
To oblivion's gloomy portal !

The Merchant Cræsus

The flowers that in perfect beauty sprang
By the wayside, you never saw them,
And the birds that so sweetly o'er you sang,
You passed unheeding below them ;
But out in the choking dust of the road
You ceased not your scraping and raking
For the rubbish called gold, your cumb'ring load
When you found it, still heavier making.

Till at last to your journey's end you came,
Your hopeless grave to be stored in,
Where the mole and the worm await your frame,
Freed from its useless burden ;—
All the pleasure lost that you might have found
By the way over which you hurried ;
Not one sweet memory of scent or sound ;—
Dead before you were buried !

And oh ! if the grave-yard be not the end
And the soul die not with the body,
To what poor uses their toilings tend
Whose wealth is their only study !

The Merchant Cræsus

For the strong-box drops from the stiffening hands
As they slip from ledger and journal,
And he that bore it a beggar stands
At the doors of the life eternal.

For me; I would treasure each hour that flies,
Nor waste it in vain employments;—
That if all I am in the coffin dies,
I'll have known life's real enjoyments;
Let me prize full highly my earthly home,
Her gifts, her smiles and her laughter;
But still through her groves and gardens roam
With my face to the dim hereafter.

And He that made me and placed me here,
If His favor I humbly merit,
I think He will some day make it clear
That the grave's not the tomb of the spirit;
And even to me may the kingdom show
That's flowing with milk and honey,
And give me in fullness the joys to know
That are not to be bought with money!

LOST

WITH powers designed for noblest use,
He stooped to vileness and to loose
Wild ways of life that marred his soul,
And brought him under base control.

Yet oft he said: "I will arise
And seek the light of earlier skies,
That once in fullness shone on me;
I'll make me what I ought to be.

"Unworthy friends I will forsake,
All taints I'll from my nature shake,
These slimy paths I'll leave behind,
The walks of peace again to find."

Yet though his wings he often spread,
His flights to no safe eyrie led;
So thick upon his feet had grown
The foulness, still it dragged him down.

Lost

And so the war went wavering on,
Till months and years were come and gone :
But always 'twas a losing fight—
He would not strive with all his might.

But oh ! the agony and the tears,
The bodings and the awful fears,
The waves of bitterness that roll
Around a lost, yet struggling soul !

When in some sudden, thundrous hour,
He sees the end before him lower ;
As by a lightning-flash revealed,
The battle o'er, and lost the field !

And now is come the day of doom,
The clouds are closing round in gloom ;
Oh ! let their closing be complete,
And kindly hide this sore defeat !

The mercy-time for him gone by,
In vain for help his anguished cry ;
Held fast between the iron jaws
Of God's inexorable laws.

Lost

And swiftly rolls the ruthless tide,
From bank to bank now foaming wide,
And gathering, on its sloping bed,
For that dread plunge, so nigh ahead.

Swept on by that remorseless surge,
At last, behold him at the verge;
The blasted life has reached its close,
One wailing shriek—and down he goes!

DE PROFUNDIS

Oh! but it's dreary, dreary, lonely and old to grow,
Nor ever to yearn and languish one friendly soul
to know;

Weary of all things earthly; and with no gracious
faith

To long for one thing only—the nothingness of
death!

To have drifted far from the highway, the faces
and voices of men,

Nor to care to get back and see them or hear them
ever again;

Scornful of all things mortal and of future woe or
bliss;

Oh! but it's dreary, dreary, to have come to a state
like this!

Where is the pleasant sunshine that once you loved
so well,

The gleam that flooded with glory river and field
and fell,

De Profundis

Where are they now that loved you and the love
that you returned,
Why are they quenched so wholly, those fires that
brightly burned?

Where did you lose the starlight, where did you find
the cloud,
Where was the wedding garment exchanged for
this dark shroud,
What could it be that hardened the heart that was
once so kind,
And chilled in the bitter waters that once so cheerful
mind?

Ah! that were a dim, dim story, nor easy to place
the blame!
The wingless moth, what drove it into the scorching
flame?
The lights of the North at midnight gild the
gloomy realms of frost,
But ah! there is no aurora for the heart whose hope
is lost!

De Profundis

It is sad to be hopeless-hearted, to be broken, lonely
and old,

To have come to the shadowy regions, the nights
of the killing cold,

But saddest to cease from loving, nor that ceasing
to deplore,

To feel, nor care though you feel it, that you can
love no more !

Oh ! but it's dreary, dreary, unloved, unloving age,
The book of your life slow closing and a blank now
ev'ry page !

Close it and clasp it and leave it and get you under
the ground,

Nor for you shall peal any trumpet, nor any
awak'ning sound.

There are gardens of greenest verdure in the
desert's sandy sea,

The dews of heaven have kissed them and clothed
them with flow'r and tree,

But what sweet rain can revive it, that barren insen-
sate clod,

The human heart that has drifted away from the
Living God?

AD MUSAM

WANDERING home in the twilight,
An evening or two ago,
The western clouds still rosy,
With the short'ning day's last glow.

I said: Gone again is summer,
And, another autumn, too,
The winter nights are upon me,
And what am I going to do?

Will the Muse once more come to me,
When the frosts the waters bind,
To the nook where oft I've wooed her,
With a pure and happy mind?

Or shall I, for the smiles she gave me,
Find the cold averted eye,
And vainly attempt to call her
From her home in the far-off sky?

Ad Musam

How lightly I seemed to leave her!
Can she know that whate'er I feigned,
Though I lingered, I knew my baseness
And my love for her remained?

Yet I wasted the days of Summer
In a low-pitched, profitless stir,
Nor recked of the long nights coming
When I should be suing to her.

How faithless I was, she knows it!
My coldness, and all my slights
Yet, Oh Muse! once again befriend me
And be kind o' the winter nights!

For the hours would go by in glory,
Not an evening be too long,
Could I strike the chord of the music
Of a not unworthy song.

Ah! the months and the years neglected,
Such as late I've left behind,
Have made that music, I fear me,
Not easy for me to find!

Ad Musam

But oh! if I may not find it,
Have I lost that sweet employ,
Let me still come back to the chancel
With the old, the sacred joy!

To them, oh Muse! that loved you,
Nor failed you for season or clime,
Nor squander'd with them that slight you,
The priceless years of their prime!

That held to your service truly,
To your uttermost garment's hem;
And still the truer they served you
The kinder you were to them.

For though that calling celestial
Small gain of the earth assures,
They know it, the noble-minded,
No service hath wage like yours.

Then though I've been heedless and wayward,
Be not, oh Muse! all severe,
If I may not sing with the singers
Let me still the singing hear!

Ad Musam

But if I'm fall'n deaf to that music
Let the winds of winter rave
And the snowdrifts heap upon me,
Hiding a merciful grave!

A NEW MAUD MULLER

MAUD MULLER, when the weather is fair,
Rocks all day in her rocking chair ;
While round her on the verandah floor
Are cheap newspapers by the score ;
And books, still cheaper, about her lie
While Maudie watches the folks go by ;
Just moving enough to 'scape the sun,
She rocks and rocks till the day is done,
And now and then, keeping time to her swings,
Some fribble from some flash play she sings ;
The while her husband, down at the shop,
Grimy and sweaty, without a stop,
Or ever a breath of the natural air,
Toils—to keep Maudie in her chair,
And to dress her up in the clothes she loves,
Ribbons and flounces and gauzes and gloves,
And rings and bracelets and such-like stuff,
Whereof she can never get enough,
And a wagonload of which she must wear
Before she can rock in her rocking chair.

A New Maud Muller

He toils till he's weary in ev'ry limb,
But Maudie, she wastes no pity on him,
In her small brain there is but one shelf
And Maudie fills it completely herself ;
Oh! she's just too sweet, when togged out gaudy
And don't you forget it, she knows it, does Maudie !

When I see Maudie in that big chair
It makes me so mad I could almost swear ;
I think of the husband down at the shop
Watching the big steam-hammer drop,
Toiling and moiling the whole year through,
Doing the best that it's in him to do,
Doggedly drudging through foul and fair
For Maudie and that old rocking chair,
With never a chance any headway to make,
For Maudie can neither boil nor bake,
The " hired girl" has to do it all
And she must be paid, and that's a call
Upon his poor pocket that oughtn't to be,
But Maudie's a " lady," don't you see?
So the " girl" and the man from the grocery store
Run the house from the kitchen door ;

A New Maud Muller

And as for making herself a dress,
As near could she make a winning guess
At the Sphinx's riddle of the ancient days—
I wonder how she gets on her stays!
And so the dressmaker has to come
Too often to that misguided home,
And when she's been settled with, what a hole
Has been made in the little weekly "roll!"

But still, ungrieving, he drudges away,
This ill-used husband, from day to day,
And for all I know his Maudie he loves
Nor grudges the bangles and rings and gloves
Which Maudie, I think, loves more than him;
(Her power of loving, I fear, is slim,
Except it be frippery, frills and show,
What could that shallow nature know?)
Oh! how it would look on his hard hands
That diamond that gleams from one of the bands
In which her fingers are thickly cased,
(Though this is the only one not paste).
To pay for it long will keep him poor,
But Maudie must have her diamonds for sure;

A New Maud Muller

No matter how sorely he's distressed,
Maudie must be arrayed in the best;
If better-off neighbors get this or that,
Maudie must have it, that's what's what!

It's a mercy he isn't overbright,
Nor sees things always in their true light;
If he saw Maud as she's seen by me
Oh, what a commotion there would be!
How Maud's glad clothes would get into her
trunk—

That is, if the man had a bit of spunk—
And the splinters of that old rocking chair
Should fly, first thing, through the frighten'd air;
Maudie should yank that diamond off
And make a bee-line for the kneading-trough;
The hired girl and the dressmaker too
Should get leave of absence, p. d. q. !
She'd think she'd encounter'd the Terrible Turk,
And she'd take right hold and get down to work;
That's what you'd do—you hear me shout—
Or else, dear Maudie, you'd just get out!

A New Maud Muller

I know there are women that struggle and strive
Their useless husbands to keep alive ;
That stand by the worthless creatures through
All failures, as only a woman can do ;
For e'en turned out on the stony streets
The heart of a loyal woman beats
For the wretch that broke it and put it there—
May God befriend her in her despair !
The one I sing of is not that kind,
Yet thousands of such are easy to find ;
But of these I'll tell at another time—
I trust it will be in a fitting rhyme—
My muse for the present has done her share
With the story of Maud and her rocking chair.

LONGING FOR SUMMER

THE sun is over the line
And he's climbing daily higher,
Bringing the months that are mine
And the days of my desire.

The ice is gone from the streams,
The crocus is on the lawn,
I hear in my morning dreams
The robins piping at dawn.

And the Easter bells ring out
And the church-folks come and go ;
Ah, happy are they, the devout,
Be the service high or low !

Peal loudly, ye Easter bells !
Be heard by the farthest sea ;
But spring on the greening fells
Brings a dearer joy to me.

Longing for Summer

Fair are they beyond belief
The maidens in proud array,
But the bud and the opening leaf
Are wondrous to me as they.

Oh! maidens and matrons fair,
I ask, as I watch you go,
Is it Easter or this soft air
Makes your happy faces glow?

O'er hamlet and crowded street
Are the bells in joyous swing;—
Would their chiming be so sweet
Were it not the time of spring?

Ah, she erred not in the least,
The wise old church—ne'er fear—
That chose for her chiefest feast
The bud-time of the year!

Yet not for herself is all
The love that for spring I bear,
Not wholly am I her thrall
Though the sheen be on her hair.

Longing for Summer

Not wholly for what I see

Oh Spring! do I give praise,
But I know that you bring to me
Full surely, the summer days.

The days when I lead my life

When I leave behind the mire,
And say to the petty strife
And the little cares—Retire!

When the stillness of the woods

And the lake's far-shining shore
Bring the silent, happy moods
And the soul is found once more.

Yet, thankful am I, oh Spring!

To have seen your face again,
For Time with me is a-wing,
Full soon you'll blossom in vain

For me: but I make this plea:

Ere I rest 'neath your green sod
May I one more summer see—
If that be pleasing to God.

Longing for Summer

Then shine for the spring, but climb
 Oh Sun! still daily higher,
And hasten the summer time
 And the days of my desire!

WIND IS GIVEN TO BLOWING

ACROSS the fields one winter day,
When I was young and lusty,
I to my true love took my way,
The snows were white and crusty.

A bitter wind blew from behind,
It drove me on the faster ;
But I, I laughed at cold and wind,
Love was my only master.

And as I went I crooned a song,
A song right blythe and cheery,
The burden was : It won't be long
Till I am with my dearie.

Before me stretched a frozen pond,
Thus to be stayed I hated ;
And who'd go round when just beyond
His sweetheart for him waited?

Wind is Given to Blowing

As light I felt as any dove,
I thought the ice was bearing,
I wanted so to kiss my love!
And on I ventured, daring.

The wind behind me piped amain,
The ice was smooth and willing;
But soon, to be ashore again,
I'd given a many a shilling!

The piping wind behind me blew,
It blew me as it listed;
Oh, had she seen, my love so true,
How I was twirled and twisted!

It drove me here, it drove me there,
Like lamb driven to the slaughter;
Not everywhere the ice did bear,
Soon I was in the water!

And oh, what thoughts in that chill wave
Then through my brain went shooting!
Chill was the wave, but I was brave—
At last I found a footing.

Wind is Given to Blowing

And dripping, freezing, on I went—
No song I now was humming!
Almost with fright my love did faint
When thus she saw me coming.

But soon, with her, my woes were past
And I was warm and cosy;
I mocked my dangers, till at last
Her cheeks again grew rosy.

But ah! she said, while fondly fain
A kiss on me bestowing:
Don't venture on the ice again
While thus the wind is blowing!

Now many a spring and many a fall
Since then we've been together,
But often, often, we recall
That day of wintry weather.

And many a time she's held me back
When I too fast was going:—
The ice, my dear, may hide a crack—
And the wind is given to blowing!

STONY ISLAND

IN these long winter nights when winds are roaring,
And flinging to and fro the groaning trees,
O'er some loved book I like to sit a-poring,
Careless of drifted snows and frozen seas ;
I close the shutters and draw down the curtain,
And stir the fire until it sparkles bright ;
Wild though it storm without, I'll take no hurt in
My room so full of warmth and cheerful light.

And often, weary of my books and reading,
I wheel me closer to the crackling blaze,
And vacant sit, my drowsy fancy feeding
With thoughts of other times and better days ;
And while the bitter blasts outside are swishing,
Snarling and growling at the flying flake,
I dream of smiling skies and summer fishing,
And Stony Island in the shining lake.

No special beauty has this Stony Island,
Unknown to fame it sits amid the waves ;
No vine-clad slopes or cloudy regions highland,
No tow'ring cliffs hung over thundering caves ;

Stony Island

It neither hard to reach nor far removed is,
Yet oft I ponder in this easy-chair ;
Of all my little wealth the best beloved is
The mem'ry of the days I've lived up there.

The days I there have lived ! for that was living ;
Light moved my feet upon that sunlit shore,
While Nature's ready hand was gladly giving
Welcome and holding wide her open door ;
Escaped from business cares and city noises,
From all the turmoil and the deadly haste ;
No longer dulled by ledgers and invoices,
And all the things that make of life a waste.

In every human heart a Poet dwelleth,
Though unsuspected in our common moods ;
And where's the book from out whose pages wellet
Such music as is heard amid the woods,
Or on the waters?—still from rift and fissure
The ceaseless pipes of Pan are heard to blow ;
And, Stony ! I must think 'twas not the Fisher,
It was the Poet in me loved thee so.

Stony Island

And musing here, I think of those departed,
Companions there of many a genial hour,
Old friends beloved; and I grow tender-hearted,
Yet bow me duly to the omniscient Power
That took them from me; these rude winds are
crying
Above their graves, those sharers of my mirth.
Meseems, as still the years go faster flying
I love them more than when they dwelt on earth.

Ah! oft at Stony do I feel them near me,
I hear their whisperings, and happy tears
Spring to my eyes, and loving fancies cheer me,
Rise in my breast and banish doubts and fears;
Companions of my prime! when I remember
Those summer days my thoughts are sanctified;
And gladly do I hail Life's bleak December
That some day soon shall bring me to your side.

And let it be at Stony, our reunion;
Await me surely by that winding shore;
There let my spirit join you in communion
Sweeter than any that we knew before;

Stony Island

In boundless space permitted to be vagrant,
With marvels new and strange on ev'ry hand,
No earthly mem'ries shall be half so fragrant
As those that rise to us from Stony's strand.

The boats will come and go with laughing fishers,
Our followers in the joyous pastimes there;
Unweeting all of us, their fond well-wishers
Hov'ring above them in the upper air;
And that no happening come to them distressful
This shall we hope; and with delight we'll see
Each in his pleasant toiling still successful
And happy there, as once we used to be!

TO C. H. M. AT STONY ISLAND

“When other hearts and other lips
Their tales of love shall tell.”

WHEN, straining on the quivering line,
The gamey bass pulls hard,
And you with wary touch and fine
His rushes fierce retard;
Or when the fish in some wild dash
His freedom gets again,
And you with stormful words and rash
Affright the peaceful main;

At such a time, full well I know
’Tis not of me you’d think;
The only thing to ease such woe
Is—cuss and take a drink!
But when the game is in the net
And you again breathe free
As joyfully your throat you wet
Then you’ll remember me!

To C. H. M. at Stony Island

When open the “ piano” stands
The keys in glistening rows,
And to the touch of practiced hands
The gurgling music flows;
In mem’ry’s sunshine then to bask
And not forgotten be;
Oh, that’s the time! ’tis then I ask
That you’ll remember me!

FISHING JOYS

WHEN I to my fishing days look back
I remember some that were glorious ;
No thing to my perfect peace did lack ;
I felt like a hero victorious.

With summer smiling on shores and seas,
And ev'rything just to my wishing ;
A warm bright day and a gentle breeze
To ruffle the water for fishing.

Jocund was I then and light of heart,
Though scarcely I knew the reason ;
Pan's spirit caught me and made me part,
Unaware, of the shining season.

The bass bit freely, the sport I like !
Of fishing I had my fill then ;
I knew when to play and when to strike,
And proud was I of my skill then.

Fishing Joys

No king on his throne so blest as I,
All care to the breezes giving:
Lifting my face to the sunny sky,
And happy that I was living!

And oft as the fish bit fierce and wild,
My line through the water swishing,
I would shout for glee like a very child;
Oh, that was the joy of fishing!

But the luck not always ran that way;
I remember days of despairing;
When things went wrong the livelong day;
I smile when I think of the swearing!

I mind me of days, long days ill-starred,
When the Fates were hostile clearly;
Shoal after shoal you fished right hard,
But the bass held aloof severely.

Or struck you, perchance, at evening's edge,
The sun, say, ten minutes under;
And your hook got caught on that old ledge,
And the fish just coming like thunder!

Fishing Joys

Darkness at hand ; those infernal rocks
Holding like death to your leader,
The while your comrade heaps the box ;
Imagine the case, oh reader !

I've seen when the fish were biting well,
And you felt you were doing nobly,
The restless lake would begin to swell,
Your skiff to pitch and grow wobbly.

The wind rose up and the waters too,
The rain came helter-skelter ;
Up went the anchor, and off you flew
Drenched, to the nearest shelter.

So lately asleep, the waters woke,
Looked round them and doffed their nightcaps ;
Leaped at the gale and their anger spoke
Through teeth of a million white-caps !

And sometimes, too, when the lake was still,
Its clearness the eye delighting,
You found your fish, but with all your skill
You could not get them to biting.

Fishing Joys

They were surely there; your close-watched bait
 You could feel them nibbling lightly;
But you struck too soon or struck too late,
 You could not time them rightly.

Or if you did it was all the same;
 Your line went snarling and kinking,
Caught in the guides and lost your game,
 And you just felt like sinking

The whole blamed outfit in the lake,
 All fishing a humbug styling,
Only a fraud and a first-class fake,
 Denouncing your luck and reviling!

Your line now free, again you essayed
 The art some call by misnomer
Gentle; so skillful the casts you made,
 Soon you were fast to a "comber."

"Aha!" you said, "this is better," your pet
 In a twinkling dismissed and banished;
Alas! as the big one reached the net
 He got off somehow and vanished!

Fishing Joys

You didn't swear ! neither verb nor noun
 You mangled and gave to slaughter ;
But the words you choked and swallowed down
 Would have scorched a hole in the water.

And as you sat there in that sweet mind
 Belike some crony drew near you,
And saw your state and with jests unkind
 Began to gibe and to jeer you.

With anger almost it made you sob ;
 How you longed in plainness to tell him,
Your thoughts of him ; you'd have liked the job
 With a huge poleax to fell him !

Laugh not, oh, reader ! while I recite
 A fisherman's sad mischances ;
They're hard to bear just when they bite,
 The points of those keen lances !

Even I, a placid and gentle knight
 Of the rod, not given to whimper,
Have sometimes fairly lost the fight
 In a battle with my temper.

Fishing Joys

I have longed sometimes to quit the boat
And, landing for safe isolation,
Rail at all things ashore or afloat
And blaspheme the whole creation !

Sweet is the lot of the fishing tribe,
Cheery their shouts and their laughter ;
And pleasant the things that I describe—
To think of a twelve months after !

But trouble comes to all sons of earth ;
Their pleasures the more endearing ;
Oh, reader ! what would fishing be worth
If it gave no matter for swearing !

And what would this mortal life be worth ;
What should the sun give us light for,
If there wasn't sorrow as well as mirth,
And always something to fight for ?

No stream gets down to the sea unvexed ;
Over bars and shallows it's driven ;
And often I ask myself, perplexed,
Can there be any fishing in Heaven ?

Fishing Joys

Can sudden tempests and seething squalls
That tumble you shoreward flying:
Can clouds that open in waterfalls
While deep unto deep is crying:

Can kinking lines and tackle unsound,
And troubles that come in legions
To anglers on earth—can these be found
There in the celestial regions?

Alas! I fear not; and I grow sad,
For all my experience teaches
No fisherman could be truly glad
Where there could not be any breaches

Of the law that tells you: you shall not swear
Nor give ear to motions distressful
Of an angry spirit; for who would care
To fish, were he always successful?

Had you ev'ry venture your utmost wish,
And you weren't backward at wishing:
Never broke your tackle, nor lost your fish,
Where were the joy of fishing?

Fishing Joys

Sure, the angler's sport is an image of life,
Steep highland it has and meadow,
Its pleasant days and its days all rife
Both with sunshine and with shadow.

And when memory broods in her mellow light
O'er the checker'd days you had once,
It's not easy to tell, as they shimmer bright,
The happy hours from the sad ones.

And when I look back to the fishing I've had,
I'll say, though it may sound daring,
I can't help feeling half way glad
When I think of the wrath and the swearing!

TO G. S. L. AT NARRAGANSETT PIER

At Narragansett Pier
The price would be too dear,
With too much style and fuss
For this plebeian cuss.

Maybe 'twould do him good,
Perhaps he'd be less crude,
And less a daily sinner
With daily dress for dinner.

For now the thin veneer
He's picked up here and there,
Wears off through stress and strain,
And shows the native grain.

For such high life too crass,
He much misdoubts, alas!
In him will always dwell
The Scot unspeakab-el!

To G. S. L. at Narragansett Pier

Though somewhat polyglot,
A rough, unruly Scot,
A rustic at the core,
Whom dainty things but bore.

Held fast to the degree
Imposed by destiny :
As day and hour grow ripe,
Reverting to the type.

I'd like to see the girls,
Round whom the breaker curls,
As if it fain would kiss
Each buxom, rosy Miss.

But such a charming sight
Would bring but short delight,
And make me feel at last
That my poor day is past.

So I'll take up my rod
And seek the paths I've trod,
And show my ankles bony
Unto the waves at Stony.

To G. S. L. at Narragansett Pier

Where I can fish and swear,
With no one near to care,
Or heed me if I yell
Out things I dare not spell,

When some confounded fish
Has balked me of my wish,
And will not show a fin
Because I “horsed him in,”

And where, before I’m up,
O’Neill comes with his cup—
Ye Gods! how good it feels
That cocktail of O’Neill’s!

And where old John will wink
And say: “Will, don’t you think?”—
The rest you can suppose,
Or else your senses doze.

I’ve heard of speakers grand
Whose fame has filled the land,
Of Webster and of Clay
Both great men in their day;—

To G. S. L. at Narragansett Pier

For all their eloquence
I would not give three pence.
I'd rather, when I'm dry,
A wink from John Brown's eye.

So Narragansett Pier,
You'll see me not, I fear,
Your beach and salty sea
In vain will wait for me.

I'll go where I belong ;
No polo or ping-pong
'Round Stony Island's shoals—
But some congenial souls.

Old fogies whom I like,
Who've trailed the dusty pike
Of life with me for years,
And whom the Past endears.

And, George, if you should join,
We'll recognize your coin,
And take you by the hand
And make you of the band.

To G. S. L. at Narragansett Pier

And though you've grown so good,
To say it may seem rude,
We'll venture on the brink,
And sometimes at you wink.

And if you've got so fine
As to disdain that sign,
Pray keep yourself, my dear,
At Narragansett Pier.

But if you'd like to please
The friend that sends you these,
Your old and loving crony,
Pack up and come to Stony!

THE BIG BLACK DOG

"I there wi' something did forgither
That put me in an eerie swither."

—BURNS.

THE Colonel was trudging homeward late
And he had on board a most noble freight,
Yet to call for a cab he was scorning;
He'd been out with the BOYS and had had a good
time
And was now toddling home as the church-clock's
chime
Struck a wee sma' hour of the morning.

The sidewalk rose and again it fell,
Like a bough in a breeze or a sea in a swell,
A thing at such times most muddling;
It would roll and wabble and undulate,
But the Colonel would brace himself calmly and
wait
Until once more it had settled down straight,
And then he resumed his toddling.

The Big Black Dog

When lo! of a sudden, right there in the street,
So near it almost seemed at his feet,
A something rose up frightful,
A BIG BLACK DOG, with big white fangs
And eyes that would curl all your hair into bangs,
So savage they glittered and spiteful!

Yes! of all the dogs that ever were seen
By the day's full light or the moon's pale sheen
This monster o'ermatched them vastly;
There ne'er was a Dog so Big and so Black
As he fronted the Colonel there in the track,
With his wolf-fangs gleaming ghastly!

The Colonel smiled and said he: "Good Doggie,
I'm a little late and a little groggy";
But the Black Dog's jaws were quivering;
Friends with the Colonel he would not be,
Fiercely he snarled, and the Colonel, he
Fell all a-shaking and shivering,

Whiter he grew than a graveyard ghost,
The grog that was in him froze solid almost,
He had ice formations internal;

The Big Black Dog

He dodged and he plunged and he well-nigh fell,
But at last he got by, and with one wild yell
He lit out for home, did the Colonel!

And Oh, how he went! looking never behind,
Driving before him a little wind
Till the gas jets wavered and flickered;
The leaves flew up and the small twigs too,
And the dust that he raised almost hid him from
view;
For the Colonel was making a record!

And when he got home he fell down prone
At his own front door with a gurgling groan,
And he called on the Powers Supernal;
“Keep away that Dog, keep him off, I implore,
And I’ll never stay out so late any more”;—
But the Dog had abandoned the chase long
before:—
He couldn’t keep up with the Colonel!

At last he arose and crawled to his bed,
With every nodule of brain in his head
Thumping and throbbing and burning;

The Big Black Dog

Not for a moment sleep could he
But he lay there and 'rastled with OLD R. E.
Until broad daylight in the morning.

Now, all ye toppers who stay out late
Give ear to the history I here state,
And refrain from jeering and scorning;
Keep away from your cups and your kings and
queens,
And go home to your waiting wives and your weans,
Or *you'll* find what to meet a **BLACK DOG** means
In the wee sma' hours of the morning!

You'll meet, as you toddle belated home
Things that will scare you for years to come,
Things awful, frightful, infernal;
And there's sure to be there, put it down in your
log,
If you don't mend your ways, that terrible Dog,
That wild-eyed, wolf-fanged Big Black Dog
That wanted to chaw up the Colonel!

THAT SUNDAY MORNING MACKEREL

THE Colonel is a famous man; in build he's short
and stout,

And when it comes to meat and drink—Oh my, how
he's dug out!

If you could but the victuals see of which he can
dispose

You'd think there nothing was in him but room
clear to his toes;

You'd say that to his knees at least he should extend
his vest,—

And every Sunday morning the Colonel's at his
best.

Right well he knows a bill of fare—no random
feeder he!

And down the list with loving care he goes from
A to Z;

He picks the dainties deftly out, tells how they must
be served,

And wo betide the waiter wight who from that law
has swerved!

That Sunday Morning Mackerel

But ev'ry Sunday morning there's just one dish can
spell

The Colonel's perfect earthly bliss—a boiled salt
macker-el!

Oh! could you hear him once describe the glories
of that dish,

And how he strove and struggled with that succu-
lent salt fish!

And how that "thick fat belly part" he sucked and
schlucked it in,

'Twould bring the water from your mouth a-trick-
ling down your chin;

Had you just from the table come 'twould make
you hungry feel

To hear the Colonel tell about that Sunday morning
meal!

And when he comes down town at noon, then 'tis a
sight to see

The Colonel's rosy countenance—but what a thirst
has he!

That Sunday Morning Mackerel

To get his papers and his mail, that's why, he says,
he came,
But we that know the Colonel are posted on the
game;
'The paper talk is all a bluff—Oh don't we know it
well,
He's only come down town once more to drown that
macker-el!

Oh! what a battle then ensues, and how that fish
will swim,
And how the Colonel fights it out and won't be beat
by him!
“ I'll smother him before I quit, I'll make him cease
to flop
“ If it takes the very last highball in all the bloom-
ing shop;”
And then he glances proudly round, like a teacher
'mid his scholars;
“ I've got a thirst on me,” he says, “ that's worth
a million dollars!”

That Sunday Morning Mackerel

Sure it must be a huge delight to be a millionaire,
Or do the heaped-up coffers bring sometimes but toil
and care?

I've heard of one with forty men to clip his coupons
off

The while himself was fed on milk ; at such delights
I scoff !

And one who for his treasures vast an outlet has
to seek

By giving libraries away a dozen times a week ;—

But all the wealth of all the Goulds and Vanderbilts
combined

And all the other money-kings is nothing to my
mind ;

There is a joy that's greater far than any they can
know,

And any Sunday, just at noon, that joy to you
I'll show ;

It fills the Colonel with content until you'd think
he'd burst

And it's just one boiled salt mackerel—with its
resulting thirst !

That Sunday Morning Mackerel

The raptures to the Colonel known o'er that long
morning meal,
There may be here and there a man those raptures
too could feel,
But for that second course at noon, that hour with-
out alloy,
There's only one could draw from that its full, its
utter joy ;
I'd like to see all friends of mine,—it is my warmest
wish,
Triumphant as the Colonel is while drowning out
that fish !

ON A LATELY DECEASED MILLIONAIRE

HE left a large estate, they say,
Four millions full, they make it,
He left it all behind, because
He could not with him take it.

He spent his days, almost his nights,
In heaping it together,
And when he saw the pile increase
Then he was in high feather.

From early youth till grim King Death
Brought forth his iron collar,
He gave no thought to anything
Save the Almighty Dollar.

And he succeeded; 'tis allowed
By up-to-date civilians,
The one success that is success
These days, is making millions.

On a Lately Deceased Millionaire

And in this human life of ours
The law is of the sternest ;
You'll not get what you want unless
You want it in dead earnest.

And he "won out" ; pardon, if I
Ring in the modern jargon ;
He gave his life for what he got,
And deemed he got a bargain.

The only life he e'er may have,
(Forgive me, oh ye preachers !)
He paid it for that heap of gold
And happiest was of creatures.

And why should we condemn and say
That this and that to blame is ;
He was indeed a happy man ;
Each man of single aim is.

The life he led his measure filled,
It pleased him so to lead it,
And I would count him fortunate
Even had he not succeeded.

On a Lately Deceased Millionaire

Not for the game he got would I
Approving flags be flaunting,
But for the pleasure and the joy
He had while at the hunting.

Oh! wretched are the mortals who
Half-willing yet half-will not!
The goal so sought they never reach,
The promised land they till not.

I know your verdict, reader mine!
'Tis thus 'twill be recorded:
A life like that was void and vain,
All barren, mean and sordid.

The April buds, May's blossom sweet,
Her air with perfume laden,
The thronèd June, by whom the earth
All glory is arrayed in:

Rich autumn's fields, the winter snows
White in the starlight sparkling,
The moaning winds, the rolling seas
'Neath sullen skies far darkling;

On a Lately Deceased Millionaire

The Universe's mystery !

The awful whence and whither :—
All these were naught to him ; he raked
And scraped his gold together.

Why blame because he saw them not ?
Reader, my thought agree with !
When that which sent him into life
Gave him no eye to see with ?

He was no poet, saint or sage,
No blood-stained empire-shaker ;
He trod the path laid out for him
A common moneymaker !

Nor let us scorn his years of toil,
His unrelenting labors
Impossible to you and me,
His easy-going neighbors.

And while the meed of worth and praise
Unto his aims refusing ;—
Perchance, as said or sung, those aims
Were not of his own choosing !

On a Lately Deceased Millionaire

And since it's ta'en him round the bend,
The coach with pale postillions,
Who knows but fruits beneficent
May yet come of his millions?

And for his future have no fear ;
On that serene my trust is :
The power that made him what he was
Will grant him equal justice !

TO JOHN L. KING

JOHN KING, my dearest joe, John,
When first we met wi' you
A glint o' nature's sunshine
Lay on your bonnie broo;
Your lauch was music then, John,
Your e'e had sic a glow,
We couldna help but like ye weel,
John King, my dearest joe!

John King, my dearest joe, John,
Through mony a hearty year
We used tae meet ye aften, John,
And aye we had sic cheer!
And when ye gaed awa', John,
The time grew dull and slow,
And heavy hung till you cam' back,
John King, my dearest joe.

John King, my dearest joe, John,
They say you have reformed,

To John L. King

And banished a' the lovin' freends
Whase hearts sae aft ye charmed ;
And now they never see ye, John,
Which fills their breists wi' woe ;—
Whatever made ye get sae guid,
John King, my dearest joe ?

John King, my dearest joe, John,
Wi' you we're weel acquaint ;
Ye may mak' oot tae spoil a man,
But ne'er will mak' a saint ;
Your halo disna fit ye, John,
Your wings will never grow ;—
Come back, and be yersel' again
John King, my dearest joe !

Ay ! let the sunshine glint ance mair
Upon that open broo,
And join the lads ye liked sae weel,
The lads sae fond o' you !
Come ! heid the table ance again
And lat the “wee drap” flow,
And be the JACK YE USED TO BE,
John King, my dearest joe !

THE TURNING-DOWN OF SMITHIE

OH! bitter were the fights we had
And sorely were we tested,
And sometimes we came out ahead
And sometimes we were bested;
And ranged in battle-order due
Of all our warriors pithy,
Of all our captains stout and true
The bravest still was Smithie!

Oft when at combat's close we were
Our doubtful fate descrying
We always found one rampart where
Our flag supreme was flying;
Above the smoke of strife still hot
Where airs victorious fanned her,
And that was sure to be the spot
Where Smithie was commander!

Though elsewhere oft our forces quailed
And our campaigns miscarried

The Turning-down of Smithie

There never yet was plan that failed

Where Smithie's lines stood serried ;

No fierce assault could him affright

No vaunting foe confound him,

The harder he made Smithie fight

The surer Smithie downed him !

There came a time at length when we

Who Smithie's deeds had noted

Went to the General's tent with plea

That he might be promoted ;

So many times he'd proven true

It was our simple notion

Advancement was his proper due,

That he had earned promotion.

And this the answer that we got,

Our hopes, our wishes blighting,

No wonder that our breaths we caught

And thought of all our fighting !

It fell on our petitioning squad

Like strokes upon a stithy :—

“ 'Twould make our friends, the en'my, mad,

Promotion given to Smithie !”

The Turning-down of Smithie

Oh, what a reason now is this,
 Turn down the man that's friendly,
Lest it displease your enemies
 If you should use him kindly,
And turn your faithful friend away
 Lest foes perchance should flout you,
And men who've tried to crush you say
 Unpleasant things about you?

Yet thus, in household of his friends,
 Brave Smithie was entreated,
In fighting so to serve their ends
 Himself he had defeated;—
But oh, it gives the heart a stitch
 To be by them rejected
For whom you've done the things for which
 You may not be selected!

ON SEEING THE PORTRAIT OF A FORMER ACQUAINTANCE NOTED FOR HIS "GUID CONCEIT O' HIMSEL'."

THOUGH framed on no uncommon plan,
And touched with no divine afflatus,
Behold the picture of a man
Who deemed himself no small potatoes.

Oh! better never to be born,
And ne'er to enter Time's dominion,
Than creep through life from morn to morn
Unblest with your own good opinion!

But he that from this canvas looks,
By no misgiving was tormented,
Howe'er he stood in others' books,
He with himself was still contented.

Yet sometimes, since I knew it well,
The merit he so little doubted,
I wonder whether it befell,
He had to change his mind about it?

Portrait of a Former Acquaintance

Oh! many a one through life has passed—
At least this is the guess I'm making—
Whose airy castles at the last
Found earthquakes ev'ry buttress shaking.

I mark that smirk, and I recall
The daily mood of him that wore it;—
I'd take my chances of the fall
For his long self-content before it!

Whate'er your purpose, Power Supreme,
What fate hereafter may await us,
Grant that on earth we ne'er may dream
We're anything but big potatoes!

ALCOHOL AND NICOTINE

(CUM GRANO SALIS!)

ALCOHOL and Nicotine,
Brain-besotting king and queen!
Many a day I dwelt with you,
Long was I your subject true,
Easily was I controlled,
Firm and constant was your hold
Over this poor wight, until
Scarce he knew he had a will;
Blindly following like a mole
Nicotine and Alcohol!

Nicotine and Alcohol,
False assassins of the soul!
I have heard your praises sung,
Read them too in many a tongue;
Of the bliss a pipe can bring,
How the bowl makes man to sing,

Alcohol and Nicotine

Drowns his troubles and his cares,
Makes them seem but small affairs,
Warding wounds that else were keen,
Alcohol and Nicotine.

Alcohol and Nicotine,
Murd'ers with a jocund mien!
Oft in sacrifice to you
I have sat where air was blue,
And the wine like water poured
Round the stained and boist'rous board,
Till forgot the maundering man
Where he left off, where began;—
You forgot not *your* due toll,
Nicotine and Alcohol!

Nicotine and Alcohol,
Leaders to a stormy goal!
Witherers of the golden grain
Fruitage of the ripening brain,
Lying curers of the sorrow
That will double be to-morrow,

Alcohol and Nicotine

Dangerous single, and combined,
Blasters of the better mind:—
But for you what some had been,
Alcohol and Nicotine!

Alcohol and Nicotine,
All too faithful I have been
In the homage paid to you
By the fond deluded crew
Owning your sway with delight
Half the muddled, maudlin night;
Hardly ere the gray dawn came
Creeping home to hide their shame;
Steeped in you from crown to sole,
Nicotine and Alcohol!

Nicotine and Alcohol,
Me no more you can cajole;
At the last I broke away
Out into the open day;
Desp'rate at the last I broke
From the wine fumes and the smoke;

Alcohol and Nicotine

From the bowl and from the pipe
I escaped—and time was ripe!
You're no more my king and queen,
Alcohol and Nicotine!

Alcohol and Nicotine,
Round me now the grass is green,
O'er my head the sky is blue,
Flecked with clouds unknown to you,
At my feet the brooklet sings,
Many a flower before me springs,
And the birds in yonder wood
Carol for my happy mood
Songs unheard where you control,
Nicotine and Alcohol!

Nicotine and Alcohol,
Freed is my rejoicing soul;
Heart and head at last are free,
Perfect peace abides with me.
In my liberated brain
Forming now is many a strain;

Alcohol and Nicotine

And the first that I shall sing
Bids a farewell to the king,
Long farewell to King and Queen
Alcohol and Nicotine !

(PER CONTRA !)

Alcohol and Nicotine,
When I think of what has been,
Of the frolics I have had
With the free fun-loving squad,
There's a thought comes in my mind
Maybe I have been unkind.
When these bitter words I wrote
Maybe I too much forgot
Hours when you made glad my soul,
Nicotine and Alcohol !

Nicotine and Alcohol,
I have looked upon the bowl,
Felt like anything but war
At a proffer'd good cigar ;
Where went round the song and jest
Once I ranked among the best ;

Alcohol and Nicotine

While to all the pleasure there
You contributed your share ;
Why on you now vent my spleen,
Alcohol and Nicotine?

Alcohol and Nicotine,
Ne'er have I a croaker been :
Now, though I must stay at home,
Shun the sparkle and the foam,
Why should I presume to say
Better men sha'n't have their day,
Mindless of unnumber'd joys
I have shared among the boys
When a stave to you they'd troll,
Nicotine and Alcohol?

Nicotine and Alcohol,
Soon for me the bells will toll ;
Let them clang ! I've had my time,
I was living in my prime !
Let the boys still have their sport,
Make them welcome at your court ;

Alcohol and Nicotine

Shame on me if I be jealous
Of the rosy, royst'ring fellows,
Fit for king and fit for queen,
Alcohol and Nicotine!

Alcohol and Nicotine,
In the spring the grass is green,
In his prime a man is bold,
But when feeble grown and old
Then he thinks that fun and mirth
Have no place upon the earth;
Not with such shall I be joined!
I am going to bear in mind
Hours you freed for me from dole
Nicotine and Alcohol!

Nicotine and Alcohol,
Mother Earth's a perverse soul,
Nags and plagues her creature man
Seemingly just all she can;
If her torturing to escape
He'll take trouble by the nape,

Alcohol and Nicotine

Choke and squeeze him till he's quaffed
Meekly one peace-pledging draught,
I'll not blame, nor you, I ween,
Alcohol and Nicotine ;

Alcohol and Nicotine,
Some there are that bar you clean,
Close the door and firmly lock it
Fearful you might hurt their pocket.
Prudent, lest someone should " holler,"
" Ho ! you're going to lose a dollar !"
Or some wagging tongue might tell
They are not respectable !
Names of such would blot your scroll,
Nicotine and Alcohol !

Nicotine and Alcohol,
Not with these shall I enroll ;
Let the lean, mechanic lubbers
And the anxious money-grubbers
Delve and dig and still connive—
Scarce they know they are alive !

Alcohol and Nicotine

Caring naught for such delights,
Rather I'll recall the nights
When you reigned as King and Queen,
Alcohol and Nicotine!

SHIPWRECKED MOTHER

THE sea was smooth, the wind was fair,
The steamship plowed along,
And from her deck in ocean's air
Rose up the voice of song ;
Their willing cheeks the sea-breeze fanned,
New life within them sprang ;
To-morrow's dawn would show the land,
And so they laughed and sang.

Behind them far were all their cares,
New sights would greet their eyes,
And fairer fields would soon be theirs
'Neath less relentless skies ;
So now, while sped the vessel on,
The song and speech did flow,
And all were happy there save one—
One bent in deepest woe.

Ah ! well from her the tears may shower,
Well may she sorely weep,
And inly rue the luckless hour
She trusted to the deep !

Shipwrecked Mother

Her baby boy, for whom, whence once
The severing sea was crossed,
His waiting father's heart would dance,
Was lost, forever lost!

Too strong for him the chill sea-mist,
He pined from day to day,
And ere his careful mother wist,
Her boy had passed away;
And when death pinched his little charms,
And still she would him save,
They tore him from her desp'rate arms
And sank him in the wave.

Ah! on the land had he but died,
In some green nook been laid,
Where oft at eve she might have hied,
And in the stillness prayed;
Some little fragrant flower have set
His tiny grave upon,
She might have deemed her darling yet
Not altogether gone:—

Shipwrecked Mother

But in that rude abyss to cast
Her babe, though void of breath,
Where only shrilled the cold sea-blast—
Ah, that was more than death ;
A thousand fathoms down to sleep
The dim green floods below,
Perchance in ocean's middle deep
To waver to and fro !

So now, while all around are glad,
And jest in merry strain,
This mother sits apart full sad
And keeps her with her pain ;
Nor cries she hears, nor vain alarms,
Her babe is her before,
Almost she feels him in her arms,
And kisses him once more.

* * * * *

Whence comes that cannon's warning boom,
Whence that far-reaching cry,
Why flare these rockets through the gloom,
Athwart the murky sky?

Shipwrecked Mother

Alas ! on rocks the ship hath sped,
She founders even now,
And death, with eager arms outspread,
Bends forward o'er the prow !

Ah ! where are now those singers all ?
See yon disorder'd crew,
From side to side they rush and fall,
Nor know they what they do ;
The thickening spray is o'er them driven,
Their hour of doom hath come,
And some are screaming loud to heaven
And some are swooned and dumb.

Reared up his head th' awak'ning deep,
As if to list the noise,
Then on he plunged with foamy sweep,
And raised his mighty voice ;
And wilder yet on board they call,
As fiercer shocks the wave ;
And only one among them all
Seeks not herself to save.

Shipwrecked Mother

Ah! why should she the rude sea fear,
Her he can scarce destroy,
This mother's life is hardly here,
But yonder, with her boy;
The billowing waves that mount the skies,
Hoarse howling for their prey,
They but behold her shut her eyes,
Her thoughts are far away.

And when the final moment comes,
And in one shriek it ends,
One shriek that all the horror sums
As down the ship descends;
Full calm, while all around her rose
The dire confusion wild,
This mother clasps her hands and goes
Content, to meet her child!

THE LITTLE PENNY

On sending to a friend an engraving of the picture "Looking for an Investment—What shall I buy?" Two blue-bonneted Scotch lads, bound schoolward, are standing at a confectioner's window, the younger intently gazing at the toys and candies within, the eager look in his eye betraying the "burning penny" in his pocket: while the other regards him indulgently and reminds him it is time to be going.

OH! homespun, nail-shod Scottish lad,
Bound schoolward in the morning,
Enchanted by the siren sweets
Those homely shelves adorning;
With eager face against the glass,
And wistful eye distended,
One burning penny in your hand,
A score of ways to spend it!

Oh! wistful, wealth-tormented lad,
I will not slight your trouble,
Nor on the stream of boyish life
Esteem it but a bubble;

The Little Penny

Myself I find depicted here!
In every line and letter,
As oft I've stood, a boy like you,
And now—what am I better?

An older boy, with cares beset
And torturing questions many,
The muckle “fairing” * still to buy,
And still the little penny;
With nose yet pressed against the pane
This solemn truth I find O,
That as one's pile of pennies grows,
Grows bigger, too, the window!

Alas! the wares that now-a-days
I would most gladly purchase
I cannot find on any shelf,
In all my weary marches;

* Fairing: What one buys or what is presented to one at a fair—usually something in the confectionery line. Used figuratively in Tam O'Shanter:—“Ah, Tam; ah, Tam, thou'lt get thy *fairing*’.”

The Little Penny

And if I found them—stinging thought!

I were but a pretender;

My little hoard of pennies poor

Not now were “legal tender!”

But had I known while from the East

The morning sun yet slanted,

To choose from all the wild’ring store

The only thing I wanted,

I should not linger, mournful now,

My Fair-day swiftly closing,

To find that all I should have bought

Was sold while I was dozing!

Oh! had my heart been only set

With firm resolve upon it,

And had I loved it utterly

I surely should have won it;

But now ’tis gone:—Oh! as it passed

It seemed so rarely bonnie!

’Tis gone—and were it here, not now

Have I the current money!

The Little Penny

For you, who at the window stand,
Not yet may thoughts come o'er you
How small the copper in your hand,
What store of sweets before you ;
Far be such thoughts from that young head—
My warmest blessings on it,
And on its tangled, towsy hair,
And on its broad blue bonnet !—

But when to Life's full fair you come,
With strong young step and steady,
Then may you know just what you want,
And have your pennies ready ;
And when your bargaining is done,
Oh ! may it when you've bought it
Give to you all the joy you deemed
It would, before you sought it !

It will not, cannot,—vain that wish ;
But ah ! you doomed young rover,
You'll reach betimes those waters wide—
I'll wish you safely over ;

The Little Penny

Then will you find, as numbed you stand
Mid faded flowers and fading,
The blood has ta'en a lasting chill
The time that you were wading.

Oh! homespun, nail-shod Scottish lad,
Not wholly with contentment
Or happy thoughts can I behold
Your “counterfeit presentment;”
It brings a world of memories back,
And musing o'er the saddest
I only laugh; but I could cry
While brooding o'er the gladdest.

In mists from those long-vanished days
All dimly framed, I send you
To one who, for their sake and mine,
Will cherish and defend you;
And when he eyes you on his wall
Some favor'd spot adorning,
May pleasant thoughts of me be his
On many a Christmas morning!

PRIVATE DRAWER

I HAVE a little private drawer at home

Wherein I keep some foolish things of mine ;
Old rhymes and letters writ while yet some foam

Was on the cup that now with sullen brine
Is oftenest filled : when to that drawer I come

My eyes sometimes grow misty and I pine
For that sweet morning-land and its soft airs
Now sunk so far behind dark seas of cares.

MARY

THE smile that breaks on Mary's lips
Is like the wave that woos the shore,
When shadows wait on idle ships,
And roses deck the fisher's door ;
The snow-white shells whereon it curls,
These are her teeth, but vain to seek
In ocean's rarest caves for pearls
To match the tint of Mary's cheek.

The light that wells in Mary's eye
Is like the flow of some pure spring
That, with no glimpse of Heaven's blue sky,
In deep wood-shades unseen did sing ;
Till once in wayward April's wane,
While venturous flowers still fear'd to blow,
A storm of wind and pelting rain
Rock'd all the forest to and fro.

Mary

And when it passed, and warm and bright
 Again the sun the woods shone o'er,
The tangled bows that screen'd his light
 From that pure fount were seen no more ;
And all its lucid depths were stirred,
 Its bubbling voice found new employ ;
And in far sylvan nooks was heard
 Its song of gratitude and joy.

So when in Mary's eyes I looked
 When mine with love were brighter grown,
His burning glance ne'er having brooked,
 No answer sparkled in her own ;
But when, with stormful sighs and tears,
 My secret from my soul was riven,
Ah, then ! as passed her shadowy fears,
 She to me turned the light of Heaven.

LOVE'S EXTRAVAGANCE

THAT I'll not see thee, love, to-night,
Nor yet until the far to-morrow
Hath faded into dim twilight,
Doth fill my foolish heart with sorrow.

When by thy side, and thy low voice
Falls sweetly on my charmed ear,
The longest hour too swiftly flies,
The parting time is aye too near.

But when from thee I loathly go,
With joy and sadness hand in hand,
The lingering minutes seem to flow,
As through the glass the slow, dull sand.

Yet are they not void of deep bliss ;—
From the long hours I steal their pain
With thinking on thy last fond kiss,
The time when we shall meet again.

Love's Extravagance

Oh! if no sun made glad the day,
And pale, meek Dian ceased to reign;
If vanished the broad, milky way,
And all the twinkling, starry train—

I would not ask for sun or moon;
I would not mourn th' extinguished stars:
Thine eyes to me would bring the boon
Of light, behind a dungeon's bars!

If the dumb woods gave out no sign,—
If when the voice of Summer spoke,
No cone hung high on the tall pine
And not an acorn on the oak ;—

I would not ask for songs or buds;
The first thy voice is everywhere;
And for the foliage of the woods,
I'd take the wreaths of thy brown hair.

The flow'riest plain that lures the fawn
Were drear and cold, wert thou away;
The stoniest hill—bleak at bright dawn—
With thee, were robed in bloom for aye!

BOB O' LINCOLN

BOB O' LINCOLN! Bob o' Lincoln!

Ah! sweet Robin, is it you?

Well may you sing, Bob o' Lincoln,

Nothing else you have to do!

Sing away: I'm listening, Robin,

Listening long and envying you—

I could sing too, Bob o' Lincoln,

Had I nothing else to do!

Bob o' Lincoln! Bob o' Lincoln!

Trill away till all grows blue,

Oh how fine you are, Sir Robin,

None, you think, can sing like you!

None, you think, could e'er defeat you,

But your pride you yet may rue;

Robin, Robin, I could beat you,

Had I nothing else to do!

Bob o' Lincoln

Could you sing so if they caught you,
Took you from your skies so blue,
And to turn a cage-wheel taught you,
Just for something else to do?
Oh, you're happy! but I'm thinking,
Robin, I were happy too—
Could I sing like Bob o' Lincoln,
And have nothing else to do!

QUEEN ANN

Oh, take me to the king! she cried,
When morning bells did ring;
And still at peaceful eventide:
Oh, let me see the king!

And often in the midnight sky
The owl, on balanced wing,
Would marvel o'er that weary cry:
Could I but see the king!

Before her jailer, day by day,
She still herself would fling:
Oh, take your loathsome crusts away,
But bring me to the king!

And when the lout was gone thereout,
And far his steps did ring,
His careless ear behind could hear:
Oh, I will see the king!

Queen Ann

King Halbert knew the truth at last ;—
One flash, and all was seen ;
Flush-checked, his hands to Heaven he cast :
My true, my slandered queen !

Through corridors, by massy bars,
Right eagerly he sprang,
While drowsing slaves caught at their staves,
And wondered at the clang.

Wide open, at his wild commands,
Flew door and bristling gate ;
Full soon at Ann's low cell he stands,—
Full soon ;—but ah, too late !

Too late his startled jailers spring,
The ponderous door back swings :
Poor Ann at last has seen the king—
Oh Ann, the King of Kings !

LORD THORWALD

LORD THORWALD's castle-towers rose high

Above a wood of lofty pines

That stretched beneath a northern sky,

Where sloes were all the peasant's vines.

Behind the towers, and fathoms deep

Down in a rocky-walled ravine,

A little brook did brawl or sleep,

In summer when the cones were green ;

But when the winter rains and thaws

Made Thorwald's henchmen keep their halls,

Swollen almost to its channel's jaws,

It thundered past the castle-walls,

And roared along its narrow bed

At midnight, till the wolf did howl,

And snoring Thorwald turn'd his head

And mutter'd, " Christ, the night is foul !"

Lord Thorwald

The king was powerless in the land,
There was no law for rich or poor;
He ruled who had the strong right hand,
The weak had only to endure.

Here long was Thorwald's bidding-place,
His fathers here before him dwelt:
But none, save he, of all his race,
But had a heart could sometimes melt.

His giant form, his swollen face,
Were as a cloud upon the land;
The peasants hid, and pray'd for grace,
When Thorwald passed with his fierce band.

One morn when day was newly dawned,
And scarce the wolf had sought his lair:—
'Twas when late Autumn swiftly waned,
And leaves were whirling in the air:—

Lord Thorwald crossed his slimy moat;
The sleepy warder rubbed his eyes,
And marked the helm and scaly coat,
As tokens of a dark surprise.

Lord Thorwald

With twenty chosen men he went,
His followers still at brawl or bowl,
So long to his coarse bidding bent,
They had his very tone and scowl.

The wind was gusty ; with a bound
Against the groaning pines it beat,
Then lull'd and they could hear no sound
Save their sharp-clicking horses feet,

Lord Thorwald rode, his men did follow,
Far distant was the expected fray,
And when the wind blew loud and hollow,
He mumbling cursed the doubtful day.

The forest's gloom well-nigh was passed,
He saw below the open realm,
And through the thinning trees was cast
A livelier light upon his helm.

When, as he issued from the wood,
He spied, just on the road's steep brink,
A little bubbling spring, and stood
To give his snorting steed to drink.

Lord Thorwald

And while the war-horse shook his frame,
And from his nostril tossed the foam,
Along a twining by-path came
A maiden from her woodland home,

To fill her pitcher at this spring,
To her the dearest in the land,
And as she came she still did sing,
And swung the pitcher in her hand.

But when she heard the full-blown breath
Of Thorwald's steed as deep he drank,
Her startled face grew pale as death,
Her pitcher rolled adown the bank.

And when huge Thorwald, helm'd and mailed,
She saw so near, her little heart
As though a knife had cleft it, failed,
And all her strength did quick depart.

And trembling on the bank she stood,
Nor dared to look or speak or fly ;
While Thorwald her young beauty viewed,
And on her gazed with insolent eye

Lord Thorwald

“ A pretty wench, by Christ ;” he said,
“ As ever rings and brooches bought !”
—And then his glances backward strayed
As of his castle he had thought.

Then : “ Fill thy pitcher, wench,” he said,
“ Thou needst not so with terror brim !
Lord Thorwald always loved a maid,
—But, Christ ! it’s little they love him.”

This last in lower tone he spoke,
And as he spoke he loudly laughed,
Then cried : “ Thy pitcher is not broke :
Fill up ! my horse his fill has quaffed.”

No word the trembling maid replied ;
But thinking of her lowly home
Among the woods, she to the tide
With downcast eyes did hurrying come.

Her pitcher filled, she’d bear it on,
Nor Thorwald’s following gaze would shun ;
But, out of sight, she’d cast it down,
And like a frighten’d deer would run !

Lord Thorwald

Thus thought the little maid; but ah!

No more through those dark woods shall ring
Her voice at morn, as pleased she saw
Her own bright image in the spring.

For as she stooped at Thorwald's feet,
His eye with kindling hell-fire glowed,
He swayed a moment in his seat,
Then quickly from the saddle bowed;

And sudden, even ere she could scream,
For that huge form, that from the wave
Did seem to rise, as in a dream
Gaunt spectres come, while night winds rave,

His shoulder pressed on her pure cheek,
His brawny arm was round her waist;
And when she gave forth shriek on shriek,
His hand upon her mouth he placed.

With: "Ho! why 'tis a noisy wench!
Thou dost but mar thy pretty face;"
—But still she screamed, and strove to wrench,
Her struggling form from his embrace.

Lord Thorwald

But Thorwald only pooh'd, and shook
Her like a toy in his strong grasp ;
Till with one last despairing look,
She in a swoon her hands did clasp.

Then Thorwald spoke :—by this his men
Were gathered round upon the road,
Nor marveled they but with slack rein,
Coolly their chafing steeds bestrode.

For since they owned this leader's thrall
No pity could their hearts invade ;
Yet there was one among them all,
Did look with sorrow on the maid.

Gilbert his name, and his thick beard
Was lightly tinged with coming gray :
His father's household God had feared ;
But he in youth had gone astray—

And long in Evil's path had trod ;
But now, when age was creeping on,
In silent hours with him abode
Dim visions of that father gone.

Lord Thorwald

Till even the bowl could not keep down
The hot remorse that surged within,
And he would swear no more to drown
His soul in that dark life of sin.

And Gilbert, in his innocent days,
Had known this maiden's father: they
Had once nigh set the woods ablaze,
In their adventurous boyish play.

And he had seen the maid before,
And knew her for the only child
Of his old playmate, and it sore
Had grieved him for his life defiled.

And when Lord Thorwald turned and said:
"Thou, Gilbert, take this dainty wench,
And see her in my castle laid,"
His swarthy cheek did visibly blench.

And as he took the fainted form,
So slow, so strangely, did he move,
That Thorwald stared—then with a storm
Of jeers, roared: "Why the man's in love

Lord Thorwald

With this same wench, ho ho ! ho ho !

Sure these must needs be love's own bands
He holds her in,—the wind might blow
Her from his trembling, fumbling hands.

“ Begone, thou white-faced stammering fool,
There lies the road, fond younker, see !
And for a time thine ardor cool,—
She shall be sweetheart first to me.”

But Thorwald's jeers brought with a bound
The red blood back to Gilbert's cheek,
He wheeled his steed like lightning round,
And with a flashing eye did speak :

“ I do not love this maid, my lord,
Nor thought have I to make her wife ;
But not by you shall she be marred,
And that I'll answer with my life,

“ And this my sword ;” and swift he drew ;
But Thorwald curled his lip in scorn,
And then he stormed, with deepening hue,
“ Begone ! or else I'll have thee torn

Lord Thorwald

“ In pieces, fool ! begone, I say ! ”

But Gilbert firmer grasped his sword,
Raised his right arm for freer play,
And dashed upon his wrathful lord.

And struck with all his might, but vain !
The tempered mail was hardly bruised ;
And quick, ere he could strike again,
Thorwald's broad blade was interposed.

A moment passed in play of swords ;
Soon Gilbert's weapon from him flew ;
Then his tough mail and sinewy cords,
Thorwald's strong steel drove deeply through.

Nor Gilbert's life alone, alas !
He cleft with that resistless blow ;
But all the dark and tangling mass
Of hair, that loosely streamed below,
The bloody blade did shear in twain ;
And when the frightened steed did bound,
Set free from the controlling rein,
Two corpses rolled upon the ground.

Lord Thorwald

Lord Thorwald rode, his men did follow,
They left behind the lifeless clay ;
No more the fitful wind blew hollow,
But all the sky was changed to gray.

And a strange stillness filled the air ;
And far off kine were heard to low ;
And dying Autumn promised fair
To make his winding-sheet of snow.

But who shall tell the winter's bound
That on that woodland home did fall,
When in their startled search they found
Their spring so far beyond their call !

Their flow'ry spring, their summer too,
The Heaven of their declining years :
She like a sun had sipped the dew
Of care away, and dried their tears.

Her song stole through the forest glade ;
Her father at his toil did start ;
Then as a tear dropped on his spade,
He blessed her in his inmost heart.

Lord Thorwald

Lord Thorwald rode, and scarce with wrath
His rocky face had ceased to glow,
Ere he had reached the broader path
Where he had hoped to find his foe.

This way he looked, and that, and keen
On either side he sent his eye;
But naught upon the road was seen,
Nor fresh hoof-print could he descry.

His men came up, hot at his side,
With visors down, they took their way,
And still the farther they did ride,
More threatening grew the darksome day.

Lord Thorwald rode, with curse and frown;
But when a distant convent bell
Sent o'er far fields the stroke of noon,
And small crisp snow-flakes lightly fell,

He wheeled his willing steed around,
Struck with his armed heel a blow;
"Home, home!" he cried, and with a bound
Dashed off into the thickening snow.

Lord Thorwald

Lord Thorwald rode, his men did follow,
They could not with their leader keep,
His stronger steed flew like a swallow,
The biting steel had pierced so deep.

They scoured along, a little breeze
Blew from them as they swiftly passed;
Scarce could they see the wayside trees,
The snow came down so thick and fast.

The dim day waned, the night came on,
Long ere their castle-towers were nigh;
Their foaming steeds were faint and blown,
Nor longer held their heads on high.

And when the darkness came, the wind
That slept since morn, again did rise;
On either hand, before, behind,
It filled the land with dreary cries,

And all the air with whirling snow,
And level heaped each hollow den;
Lord Thorwald's heart foreboded so,
He waited for his panting men.

Lord Thorwald

They toiled along, the wood was gained
Where Thorwald Gilbert's blood did spill:
When all at once, though all unreined,
With one wild snort, their steeds stood still.

And awful terror, dim-divined,
So made each rider's blood to start,
That in the pausing of the wind
You might have heard his thumping heart.

And lo! when to their leader's place
They turned, as still they turned, for cheer,
A ghastly light was on his face,
His lips were parted wide with fear!

A pale thin light, unearthly wan,
Faint on Lord Thorwald's face it shone;
It was not like the light of dawn,
Nor any light of sun or moon.

A space they gazed without a sound;
—With trebled strength came back the blast;
The woods like thunder roared around,
And trees in scores were headlong cast.

Lord Thorwald

But far above the groaning woods,
While yet the blast its loudest blew,
Above them, in the inky clouds,
One yell of agony they knew.

And when the wind sank, and grew sad,
And fearful glances round were thrown,
Lo! Thorwald's steed no rider had,
But in their midst stood all alone!

They moved away, the storm died down,
The moon came out with face of peace,
She gleamed their castle-walls upon,
The sight from far their eyes did please.

But queen of night, or king of day,
No light their leader could restore,
Save when in swooning dreams they lay,
Lord Thorwald they beheld no more.

TRANSLATIONS

THE BROOKLET

(From Goethe)

“ THOU brooklet, silver bright and clear,
Forever hastening onward there,
Upon thy banks, I ponder slow,
Whence art thou come, whereto dost go?”

“ I come from shady rocks among,
By flower and moss I glide along,
And on my bosom ever lies
The image of the friendly skies.

“ Therefore my thoughts are light as air,
Forth am I driven, I know not where :
But He that called me from the stone,
That same I think will lead me on.”

THE SILESIAN WEAVERS

(From Heine)

No tears in the gloomy, angry eyes;
They sit at the loom and the shuttle flies:—
Deutschland! we're weaving a shroud for you
And a threefold curse weaving into it, too—
We're weaving, we're weaving!

A curse for the God unto whom we told,
Hungry, our wrongs in the winter's cold;
Vainly we waited and hoped and prayed,
Only a jest and a sport to be made—
We're weaving, we're weaving!

A curse for the king, the rich man's king,
From whom no kindness our woes could wring,
Who from us our last poor groschen squeezed
And to shoot us like dogs in the street was pleased—
We're weaving, we're weaving!

The Silesian Weavers

A curse for the faithless fatherland,
Where shame and disgrace in favor stand,
Where the flowers are nipped ere they reach their
 prime,
And the worms grow fat in the foulness and slime—
 We're weaving, we're weaving!

The looms are clanking, the shuttles flit,
By day and by night at our task we sit;—
Deutschland! we're weaving a shroud for you
And a threefold curse weaving into it, too—
 We're weaving, we're weaving!

FREDERICK HEBEL'S "LAST PRAYER."

IN vain, Oh Nature! wouldst thou bend thee
Me to destroy, who am thine own;
Not from one atom canst thou rend thee
That e'er the circling worlds have known.

Thou shalt, thou must again awake them,
All beings, be they great or small,
Who, dying, to thy breast betake them
And dream they are no more at all.

Oh Nature, I will not beseech thee
To change thy course, eternal, fast;
I know no prayer of mine can reach thee,
Thou only wake me at the last!

I will not into air dissolve me;
Through that long sleep my drossy clays
Refined, I'll into stone resolve me,
And lock me in a diamond's blaze.

Frederick Hebel's "Last Prayer"

If in some crown that gem be beaming,
Or if, where lights are sparkling round,
On some white bosom it be gleaming;—
I'll feel it not; my sleep is sound.

In thousand hours of feast and dancing
'Twill shine, all gems outdazzling there;
But none of all that mark its glancing
Will dream whence comes that sheen so rare.

But when I wake:—Its secret solving.
I'll to the wearer this disclose:
A mortal once in tears dissolving,
Those tears into a diamond froze!

BABYLONIAN SORROWS

(From Heine)

DEATH calls for me ! Oh sweet, believe me,
In some dim wood I fain would leave thee,
In some pine forest, darkly resting,
Where wolves are howling, vultures nesting,
And where the wild sow grunts in state,
Her yellow consort's frightful mate !

Death calls for me ; it were still better
If where the high sea knows no fetter
I left thee, my darling wife, my child,
E'en though the north wind, howling wild,
There smote the deeps and from their recesses
The monsters that hide in the dim abysses,
The shark and the crocodile, past believing
Deadly, with open jaws came heaving :
Believe me, Matilda, my wife, my child,
Not so dangerous is the wild
Tumultuous sea and the frowning wood
As Paris, our present habitude !

Babylonian Sorrows

How frightful soe'er the vulture and wolf,
And monsters that tumble in channel or gulf,
Ah! creatures than these more dangerous far
In Paris, the world's fair Capital, are!
This dancing, this glancing Paris so nice,
The hell of the angels, the devil's paradise;
That I must forsake thee here, my child,
Oh! the thought distracts me, it drives me wild!

The flies are swarming around my bed
With a mocking buzz; upon my poor head
They settle themselves, a loathsome lot!
And some the faces of men have got,
And elephant-trunks upon some I see,
Like Ganesa, the Hindoo deity:
There's a hammering sound in my brain some-
where—
Ah! some one's packing a trunk in there;
My reason is going—that sound I know—
Alas, before I myself can go!

WAY OF THE WORLD

(From Heine)

HE that hath much, in his full lap
Will more be surely shaken ;
From him that but a little hath
That little will be taken.
But get thee underground with speed
If nought thou hast at all ;
They only have the right to live
Who have the wherewithal !

DER ABGEKÜHLTE

(From Heine)

("Und ist man todt so muss man lang
Im grabe liegen.")

HE that hath dropped from life away,
A long time in the grave must stay;
The hour that ends that sleep persistent,
I fear that hour is somewhat distant.

Yet, ere my light goes out for aye,
Before my heart forgets to play,
I'd fain once more, ere death me summon,
Be happy made by smiles of woman.

And she I choose must be a blonde,
With eyes like moonlight, softly fond;
The warm brunettes, 'tis my suspicion,
Would hardly suit with my condition!

The young, with pulses all a-boil,
Exult in passion's wild turmoil;

Der Abgekühlte

Their souls with stormy raptures tearing;
One hour in bliss, the next despairing.

No longer young, and not quite sound,
I'd like before I'm under ground,
To feel, just once more, love's attraction,
But with no racket or distraction !

MARY STUART'S FAREWELL

(From Beranger)

ADIEU, oh pleasant Land of France !
For thee I shall forever sigh,
Sweet home of childhood's happy dance,
Adieu ! to quit thee is to die.

Dear Land, mine own become, which I
Shall see no more as fears foretell,
Receive thy Mary's last good-bye
Oh France ! and keep her memory well.
The sails blow out, we leave the land,
And all unmoved by these hot tears
Heaven to restore me to thy strand
No pitying wave in storm uprears—
Adieu, etc.

When, midst the people of my Love
The lilies on my brow were laid,
My royal rank they did approve
Less than the charms my youth displayed

Mary Stuart's Farewell

In vain does sovereign grandeur wait
'Mong sober Scotch my slow advance;
I nothing care for queenly state
If I may not be Queen in France.
Adieu, etc.

Love, Glory, and the Poet's strain
Have made too sweet my happy days,
In Caledonia's bleak domain
How sadly changed will be my ways.
An awful presage made me scream
To think that such a thing might be;
I thought I saw in a wild dream
A scaffold raised and raised for me!—
Adieu, etc.

France, in the midst of cares and fears
The Stuarts' noble Daughter still,
As on this day that sees her tears,
To thee shall turn in all her ill.

Mary Stuart's Farewell

But Heaven! our ship too swiftly sails,
E'en now we glide 'neath other skies,
And humid night with dark hand veils
Thy fading cliffs from my dim eyes—
Adieu, etc.

LA BONNE VIEILLE

(From Beranger)

You will be growing old, oh, my sweet Love!

You will grow old and I shall be no more;
Time seems to me he does so quickly move

To reckon twice the days I lost of yore.
Live after me! but let the long years look

On you still faithful to my lessons true,
And good old dame snug in your chimney nook
Croon to yourself the songs of him you knew.

When on your wrinkled brow sharp eyes shall seek
The charms that thrilled me when my lays I
poured,

When young lips thirsting for the tale shall speak,

Oh! tell us of this friend you so adored;
Paint of my love, if it may painting brook

The warmth, the madness—the suspicions too,
And good old dame snug in your chimney nook
Croon to yourself the songs of him you knew.

La Bonne Vieille

They'll ask, " Could he for love make young hearts
bleed?"

You'll answer keen, " In me he made it grow."
" Was he e'er guilty of a shameful deed?"

You'll proudly say " He never stooped so low."
Say that his fond heart melted at a look—

Still softer 'neath his touch his lute's tone grew,
And good old dame snug in your chimney nook
Croon to yourself the songs of him you knew.

You, whom I taught to weep for suffering France,
Tell to the sons of our late-baffled braves

How I of Glory sang, and from her trance
Called Hope to soar above their bloody graves.

Remind them of the dread north wind that shook
Our laurels down for twenty seasons through,
And good old dame snug in your chimney nook
Croon to yourself the songs of him you knew.

When my poor fame, sweetheart, shall fill the land
And soothe the sorrows of your aged hours,
When, as the springs come round, your trembling
hand

My picture still shall decorate with flowers,

La Bonne Vieille

Up to this world unseen with glad eyes look
Where we forever shall our Love renew,
And good old dame snug in your chimney nook
Croon to yourself the songs of him you knew.

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